

AUSTRALIA'S ONLY INDEPENDENT PLAYSTATION 2 MAGAZINE

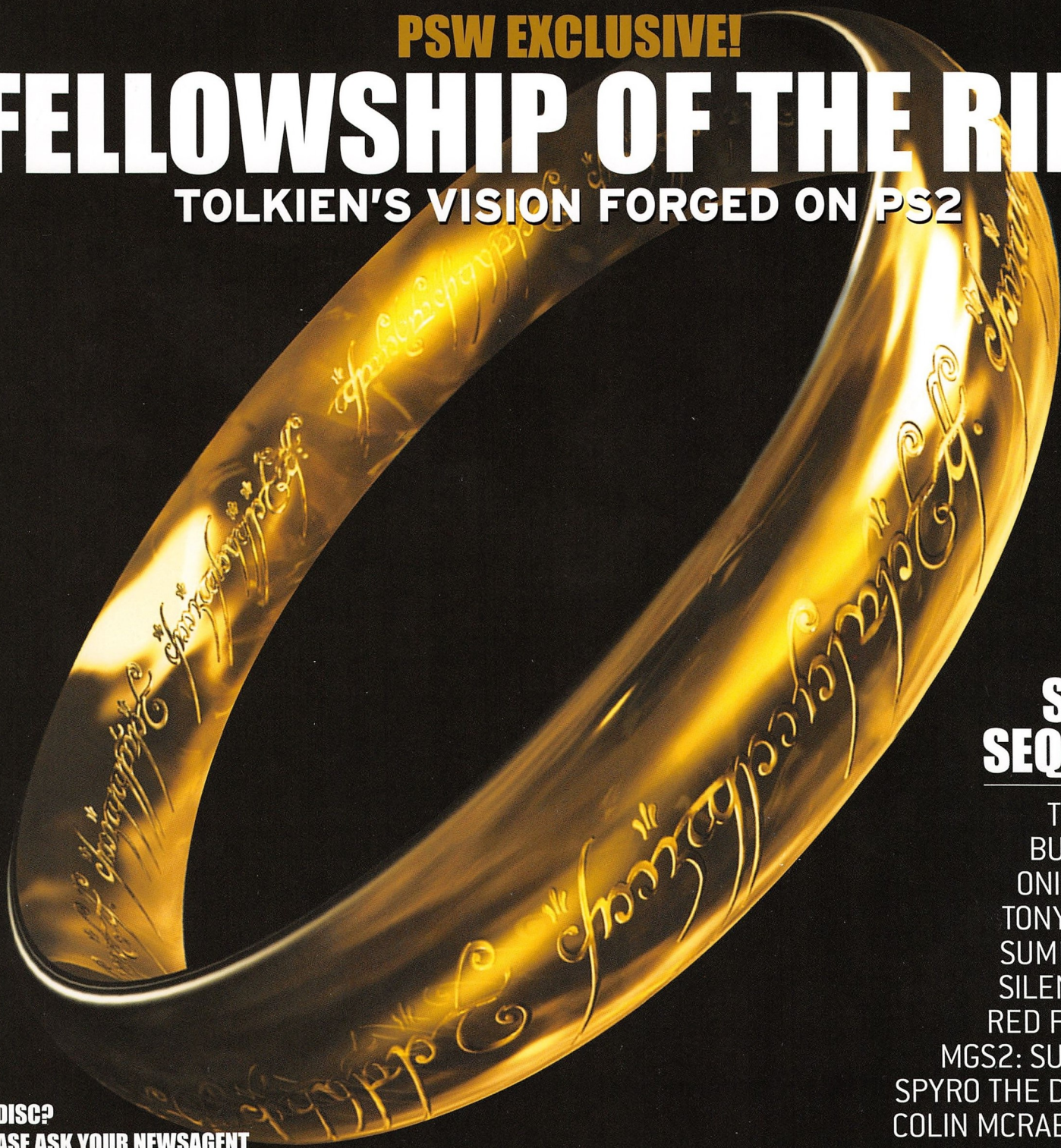
PSW

PLAYSTATION WORLD

PSW EXCLUSIVE!

FELLOWSHIP OF THE RING

TOLKIEN'S VISION FORGED ON PS2



SUPER SEQUELS!

TENCHU 3
BURNOUT 2
ONIMUSHA 2
TONY HAWK 4
SUMMONER 2
SILENT HILL 3
RED FACTION 2
MGS2: SUBSTANCE
SPYRO THE DRAGON 4
COLIN MCRAE RALLY 3

NO DISC?
PLEASE ASK YOUR NEWSAGENT

FIRST REVIEW
**RATCHET
& CLANK**
Game mechanics



CINEMATIC
**REIGN
OF FIRE**
Here be dragons



next

DECEMBER 2002 ISSUE 06
AUS \$9.95 inc. GST / NZ \$11.95 inc. GST



06

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RELIVE THE EPIC ADVENTURE IN BEAUTIFUL DETAIL AS J.R.R. TOLKIEN'S MIDDLE EARTH IS BROUGHT TO LIFE THROUGH THE EYES OF FRODO, ARAGORN, AND GANDALF. FAMILIAR LANDS, MENACING ENEMIES, AND FAVOURITE CHARACTERS FROM THE STORY ARE ALL PRESENT IN THIS AUTHENTIC MASTERPIECE.



the LORD OF THE RINGS™

— THE FELLOWSHIP OF THE RING™ —



CAST THE SPELL



SWING THE BLADE



WEAR THE RING

PLAY THE GREATEST STORY EVER WRITTEN!

COMING SOON

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Defeat the fascist regime. By blowing chunks out of walls.



60 BURNOUT 2 Sweet Mary mother of God! We've given it 10/10!



30 TONY HAWK 4 The FIFA of skateboarding games just got better.

GLOBAL

WE WENT TO THE EUROPEAN COMPUTER TRADE SHOW. WE PLAYED SOME GAMES, WE GOT BORED, WE WALKED AROUND, WE CAME BACK AND WROTE SOME NEWS ABOUT IT. THEN WE DID THE SAME AT THE TOKYO GAMES SHOW.

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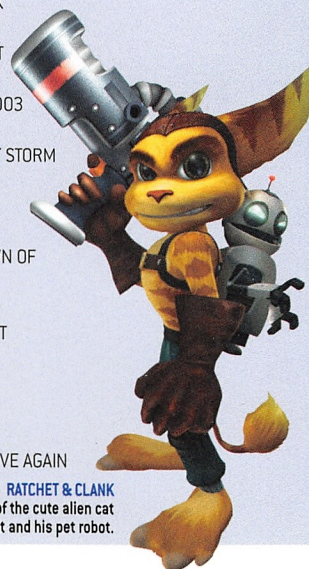
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TOLKIENEERING
J.R.R. tries his hand at this videogame caper.

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FEATURES

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24 LORD OF THE RINGS: FELLOWSHIP OF THE RING
THIS ONE'S BASED ON THE BOOKS, SO EXPECT ANOTHER ONE LATE NEXT YEAR AND ANOTHER ONE SOMETIME IN 2004.

42 REIGN OF FIRE
APPARENTLY IT ISN'T THE FIRST EVER POST-APOCALYPTIC DRAGON-SLAYING MOVIE, ACCORDING TO A RELIABLE SOURCE IN THE OFFICE. BUT IT IS THE FIRST ONE TO BECOME A VIDEOGAME. SO THERE YOU GO.

SOLUTIONS

NINE INDIVIDUAL PAGES OF ASSISTANCE ON ONIMUSHA 2, PLUS TWO SMALLER PAGES OF MISCELLANEOUS TIPS AND UNLOCKABLES STUCK ONTO THE END.

80 ONIMUSHA 2 WALKTHROUGH
88 MINI TIPS

BROWSER

NOT REVIEWS, NOT PREVIEWS, NOT NEWS, NOT REALLY GAMES AT ALL. JUST US MESSING ABOUT ON THE 9 PAGES OF THE MAGAZINE THAT WE UNFORTUNATELY NEED TO FILL.

90 NEW DVD RELEASES
MUCH CHEAPER THAN GAMES, BUT THEY COST HUNDREDS OF MILLIONS MORE TO MAKE. HOW DOES THAT WORK THEN?

94 STUFF
GOODIES THAT MAY OR MAY NOT MAKE YOU COOLER.

95 INCOMING
PRESENT DAY CHARTS, FUTURE RELEASE DATES.

96 ON THE DVD
WHAT'S ON THE COVERDISC? WHY NOT STICK IT IN YOUR PS2 AND FIND OUT THAT WAY INSTEAD OF READING THIS?

97 THE BIG PRIZE
EXCELLENT PRIZE PACKS FROM CAPCOM AND THQ. JUST IN TIME FOR CHRISTMAS, TOO.

98 NEXT MONTH
AND WE'VE ONLY GOT ABOUT SIX DAYS TO DO IT IN.



94 STUFF Play your PS2 while sitting on the toilet. No, really!



80 ONIMUSHA 2 SOLUTION Electricity. Invented by samurais.



90 DVDS Two comic book superheroes get their own film franchises.



97 THE BIG PRIZE Auto Modellista is just sooo damn sexy.

SUBSCRIBE NOW TO WIN
ONE OF TEN TOM CLANCY GAME PACKS!

SEE PAGE 78 FOR DETAILS

PSW WELCOME



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PRINTED CTP BY:

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DISTRIBUTION BY:

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CUSTOMER SERVICE:

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Next Publishing Pty Ltd
ACN 002 647 645
ISSN 1329-7694
Next Gaming
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Redfern, NSW, 2016
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EDITORIAL

Another perfect 10 in the space of three months. Are we losing our minds? Has PSW suddenly gone soft? Far from it. In fact, as evident from the number of middling scores handed out this issue, we're still the only PS2 magazine that tells it exactly like it is. Terrible games receive the terrible scores they deserve. Average games are met with a shrug of indifference. And of course, gems of genius such as *Timesplitters 2* and *Burnout 2* (see page 60) are awarded the highest accolade possible.

But of course no game can be perfect in all aspects. Indeed, we'd be the last to agree that the two aforementioned titles are flawless in every imaginable way. Instead, their few minor faults are rendered negligible by the sheer brilliance on display all through the entire game. A PSW 10/10 doesn't mean perfection, but it's as close as any videogame is ever going to get. And that's something worth shouting about.

Speaking of things exciting, so's our first ever subscription offer. How would you like to receive Australia's best PS2 mag and only independent PS2 news source every month, delivered direct to your door? Simply fill out the form on page 79 and save 25% off the cover price for twelve months. You also stand the chance to win one of ten Tom Clancy game packs featuring *Ghost Recon* and *Sum of All Fears*. What are you waiting for?

Enjoy the issue.

/ DAVID WILDGOOSE

CORRECTION

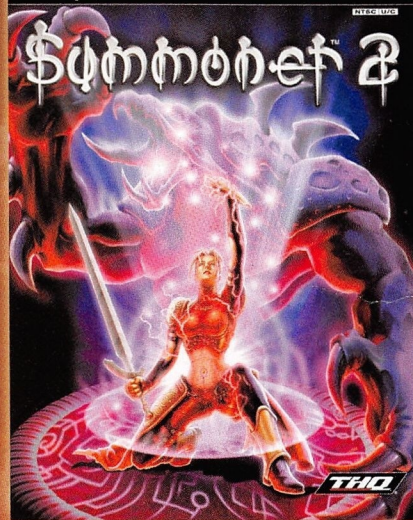
Due to a printing error the score for *Project Zero* was missing from the review last issue. The number 9 should have been sitting inside that unforgivably empty blue box. We apologise wholeheartedly for someone else's stupid mistake and urge you all to buy it immediately. It won our coveted Game of the Month award after all.

Summoner 2™

Features:

- * Battle your enemies in real time with an all-new, party-driven combat system
- * Explore over 30 exotic and imaginative 3D locales
- * Fulfil Maia's prophecy through an immersive, character-driven story.
- * Transform the "language of gods" into twelve powerful summons
- * Control up to three characters at a time, and build your party from a roster of eight unique characters with specialized attacks and spells
- * Customize your characters using a flexible skill-point system. Learn to craft deadly poisons, cast a meteor storm, or devour your enemy's soul

PlayStation 2



available

Late October

PlayStation 2



GLOBAL

MR IAN 'SOLID' SNAKE SHALL SHORTLY BE RETURNING TO PS2.

GLOBAL this month...

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BIGGER, LONGER, BETTER.

SONS OF LIBERTY APPEARED LONG AGO, BUT THE TEAM BEHIND IT JUST WON'T LEAVE IT ALONE. WE SPOKE TO THE MEN RESPONSIBLE TO BRING YOU THE LATEST LOWDOWN.

SNEAKERS

MORE SCREENSHOTS HAVE EMERGED OF the much-enhanced *Metal Gear Solid 2*, tagged *Substance*. And here they are presented for your delectation. There's been a fair bit of confusion about the game, so we spoke to the creative team at Konami to clear things up. Shackled to their work stations and thus unable to leave their darkened development suite, the programmers met us in cyberspace, via the medium of email, and allowed us to probe them repeatedly for *MGS2 Substance* info. Firstly, we wanted to know what new content gamers were getting.

"200-plus VR stages, 100-plus Alternative Missions stages where you're given missions utilising the Tanker and Big Shell, and five Snake Tales episodes that're totally new stories, with Solid Snake being the main character." Much as we thought, but what about the skateboarding? Initial shots of Snake's covert efforts were attributed to this game, before being busted as shots from Konami's *Evolution Skateboarding* – Snake and the Big Shell level were just secret characters from that game, supposedly. Which is the truth?

"The skateboarding game will be in the final game. Konami's skateboarding team approached us for a collaboration opportunity. We thought it was a cool idea, so we said YES. It's that simple." But why, we asked our oriental friends, is the game being updated in such a way in the first place? Why not save all this stuff for the inevitable *MGS3*?

"*MGS2* is a story-oriented game. Because the story governs the game, there was relatively less freedom for the player. With *Substance* we can offer so much more fun that comes from the action [gameplay] element, without being bound by the storyline. And we also wanted people to enjoy being Snake in the Snake Tales episodes." So is using Snake for the whole game an admission that Raiden wasn't such a great hero?

"There are a couple of misunderstandings here. First of all, Raiden was not the hero of *MGS2*. Solid

SNAKE was the hero – the main character. Raiden was a different perspective that the player assumes to see how great a guy Snake is. The other thing is that you don't get to play the Plant Chapter all the way through with Snake. The Snake Tales stories are not related to the Sons of Liberty story. But as you saw in the E3 video, Emma, Ames, and many others will appear in Snake Tales, while in VR Missions and Alternative Missions you get to play as Snake, Raiden, Pliskin and so on. We don't want to reveal any more returning characters! And of course, *Substance* will come with the whole *Sons of Liberty*."

Good work, Japanese group developer mind! *Substance* is out in the new year. We'll have tons more soon.



MGS-FILES "Why is there no floor 13? Is it some sort of conspiracy?" – "No, Mr Snake, it's just how some buildings are."



AND THEN "Emma, I..." [Insert 11-minute cut-scene here].



OOPS Snake locked out of the hotel room in his pants.





LONDON DRIVER GETS TWO MONTHS

GAME PERFECTLY NAMED FOR SLIPPING SLIPS INTO INFAMY WITH ANOTHER SLIP: **THE GETAWAY** GETS FURTHER AWAY.

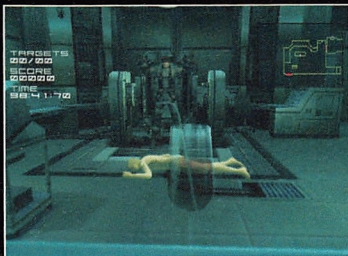
■ SLAGS

SONY'S NEXT BIG THING, *THE LONG, LONG*, long awaited crime driver *The Getaway* has been delayed again. The game now looks certain to be released in December or – shock, horror – perhaps even January 2003, having previously been scheduled for a Christmas-friendly appearance this November. Team Soho wants (and/or needs) the extra time to ensure the final product is of a suitably high standard – after so many years and so many millions of dollars, nobody wants the game to appear offering anything less than its full potential. For the sake of two months, this seems reasonable. Sequels are already under serious consideration, and neither Team Soho nor Sony wants to 'tarnish the

brand' before it's had a chance to truly get going. At least we know it exists and will definitely appear though, as we've been playing it – it wasn't always that way.

In similar, but unrelated news (other than the two being natural competitors) *Grand Theft Auto Vice City* has also been delayed, although it will still appear this year (see separate story, page 15).

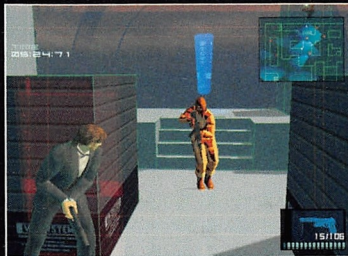
Proof of *The Getaway*'s pulling power was revealed to us this month when a two level demo arrived in our office. The writers stopped writing, the designers stop designing, the ad managers stopped browsing the internet and the work experience boy stopped playing *Pro Evolution Soccer* and instant messaging his mates to take a look at the game. Being Londoners Next's ad team were impressed – "That's the Imax cinema!" cried one viewer, followed by, "Isn't that... no, it's... is it Wardour Street? No hang on, Dean Street?" as the first office-based player took his car for a spin. First impressions from the players? There was a lot to control as the differences to *GTA3*'s system caused problems in heated situations, plus the weapon system needed a fair few reconnaissance plays to figure out too. But on the whole... they liked it. Quite a lot.



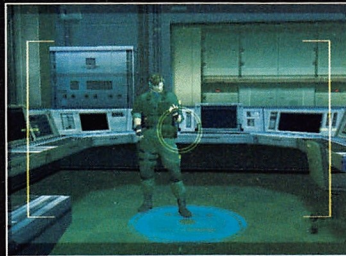
THE NAKED GUN More comically placed everyday objects?



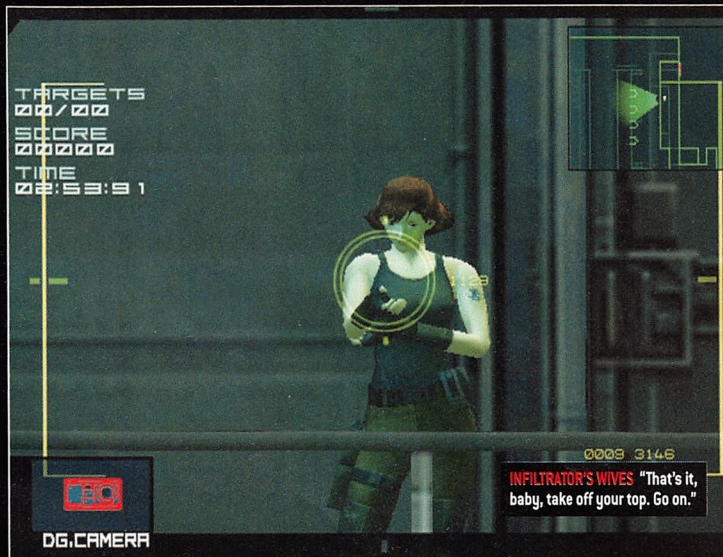
FRIDGE FREEZER Mission 96: Extinguish the chip pan fire.



STRAIGHT MISSIONARY 200 new VR levels are confirmed!



THE SUBSTANCE Less story, more action – good idea.



INFILTRATOR'S WIVES "That's it, baby, take off your top. Go on."



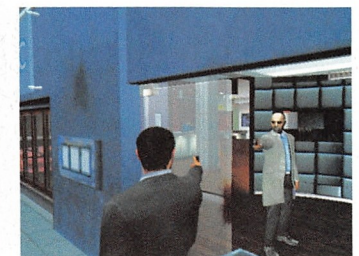
MORE DELAYS "F*** f***ing January! And f*** March."



STAY OUTTA TROUBLE Arrested for wasting police time?



PSW Cars: obsolete by the time *The Getaway* arrives.



DRK YOU, **HOLE** "You're h***ing late, you l****ster."

SUPERMARKET SHRIEK

IT WAS JUST ANOTHER TRIP TO THE SHOPS. LOAF OF BREAD, BAG OF SPUDS, SEVERED HEAD. C'MON IT'S **SILENT HILL 3**, NOTHING'S GOING TO BE ORDINARY.

■ GROTESQUE

SILENT HILL 3 CARRIES ON WITH THE TREND of bringing us each instalment of the series from a totally new perspective. First time around it was Harry Mason desperately searching for his missing daughter Cheryl. Then it was James Sunderland tormented by letters from his dead wife. Now it's young teenager Heather's turn to have her nerves jangled, her wits frayed and her bowels terrorised.

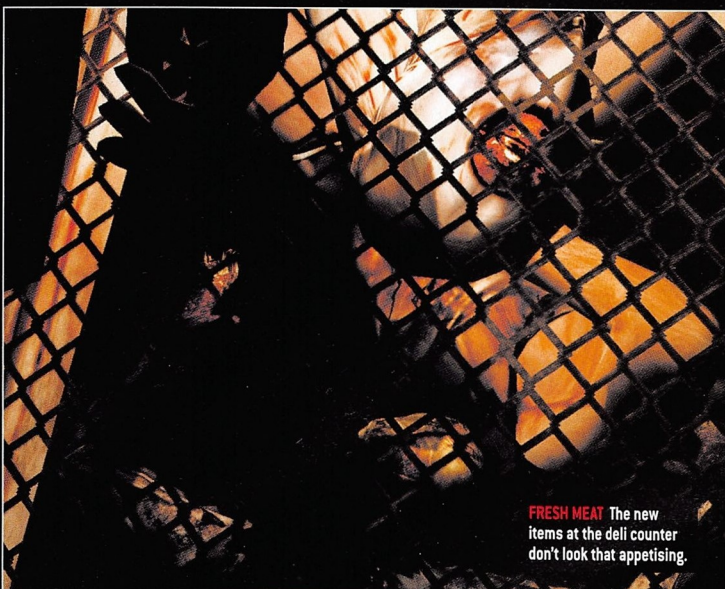
It all started out as a harmless trip to the local supermarket. The vacant checkout girl, the smelly shelf stacker, the old grannies fighting over a battered tin of sardines in the reduced section; it was all

perfectly normal until Heather stepped out of the sliding doors. In an instant, day turns into night, eerie shadows cover the walkways and macabre sounds emanate from every direction.

Without a second to even contemplate what the hell has gone wrong she's thrown into a frantic battle for survival. With grotesque shapes creeping towards her from every dark hole and an army of vicious creatures baying for a taste of her youthful flesh all she can do is grab whatever implements are close to hand and fight to stay alive. If she can survive long enough, she might just get to uncover some clues as to why the world has gone to hell and maybe even piece it all

together to reveal the true horror of her chilling predicament.

Fans of the series will be immediately familiar with *Silent Hill 3*'s terrifying camera angles, spine shatteringly evil sounds and plausibly real weaponry. Once again you're at the mercy of whatever you can find lying around. Lead pipes, handguns and a sub machine guns feature this time around. The bigger weaponry is an indication of the increased ferocity of the various creatures itching to tear our heroine into ragged, meaty shreds. Already it's quite clear that the most horrifying series of games on PS2 shows no signs of letting up its onslaught on our shattered senses.





ROYAL RUMBLE

PS2 IS FAST BECOMING THE ROCK'S SECOND HOME. THIS TIME HE'S THE SCORPION KING.

■ ROCK ON

IT WAS ALWAYS GOING TO BE A BRAWLING spectacular. When The Rock's involved, fists aren't far behind. But this time you're not just facing a load of sweaty men in pants. Egyptian assassins and supernatural warriors lie in wait throughout the twelve levels that take you from ancient Crete to the mysterious Netherworld. As you batter

your way through each location you'll find multiple power-ups for each of your weapons in true arcade-adventure style.

The aim of *The Scorpion King: Rise of the Akkadian* is to work your way up to become one of the group of assassins known as the Akkadians. As well as featuring hours of dialogue recorded by the Rock himself it also features the voice of one Mark Hamill. So that's where Mr Skywalker sloped off to.



SLASHDOWN! Can you see what The Rock is killing?

SIM-PLY IRRESISTIBLE

DON'T BE FOOLED BY THE SIMS' DOMESTICATED FAÇADE. IT'S JUST AS CRUEL AND CAPRICIOUS AS REAL LIFE.

■ VOYEURISTIC

ADMIT IT. YOU TRIED TO REMAIN ABOVE all that *Big Brother* nonsense but it ensnared you in the end. How could you not get caught up in Jess and Marty's whirlwind romance or Dylan's endearing pining for his girlfriend? Seeing real people suffer is compulsive viewing.



KILL THEM ALL Move > Living Room > Touch > Element.

Having a hand in their suffering is just too good an opportunity to pass up.

Of course the actual goal of *The Sims* is to provide your miniaturised person with a happy, wholesome existence. Construct them a comfy pad, buy every bit of electrical equipment the modern slobbish bachelor needs, find them a job with good career prospects and then get



DO IT FOR ME "And... take another shower. Now... a bath."

them out on the pull. That's the utopian way to play. True sadistic entertainment is had when things start to go wrong.

Prevent them from going to the toilet and they'll complain, become distressed and then bawl their eyes out as they wet themselves. Forget to take out the rubbish and they'll start to hate their slovenly home. Snog someone else in full view of your current beau and all hell will break loose. Play with them like puppets. Do your worst. The amount of fun to be had is endless.

Even if you choose to play the game seriously you'll find it to be the most addictive tamagotchi ever conceived. On PC *The Sims* has remained in the charts for over three years, making it one of the most popular games of recent times. We'll be able to meddle in their lives on PS2 in the coming months.



IF GOD MADE CARS

...THEY'D RUN ON OUR PISS INSTEAD OF PETROL FOR A START. LIVE THE ITALIAN DREAM WITH LAMBORGHINI.

■ SLEEK

ALONG THE SAME LINES AS LOTUS

Challenge, Lamborghini lets you race some of the world's sexiest cars by presenting you with the entire back catalogue of the Italian manufacturer. In addition to the test driver mode where you get to visit the factory and put the entire range of cars through its paces, you get to join the Lamborghini Millionaire's Club.

This elite group organises races in some of the world's most exotic locations, challenging each other to push their car to the limits. The venues will range from the Italian Alps to Paris and Tokyo, with each race interspersed with gambling challenges where money can be won by achieving goals. Some will take the form of one-on-one match-ups while others will be eliminator races and overtaking challenges.

Every Lamborghini model from 1964 onwards will feature in the game, giving gamers the chance to put the Diablo and the Countach through their paces. It will also contain a four-player split screen mode enabling you to pit modern dream machines against older hardcore racing cars.



ITALIAN TARMACADAM Not just Lamborghinis – roads too.



EL DIABLO Yes! More circles to drive round in! Cool!



AGENT UNDER MORE FIRE

BOND SEQUEL NIGHTFIRE IS LOOKING SMOOTH, SUAVE AND SOPHISTICATED.

■ GET GIRLS, KILL BADDIES, GET MORE GIRLS

NEW SHOTS OF NEW BOND, ALONG WITH SEVERAL CRUCIAL new facts and an accompanying interview. Consider yourself fully Bonded-up with information. Timed to coincide with the new Bond movie this winter, *Nightfire* is an entirely original (ie. not based on the films) adventure starring the real-life face of Pierce Brosnan.

This time around there will be more driving missions, with the developer reckoning about two thirds of the game will be shooting action and one third driving/flying/racing stuff. You'll be driving the new Aston Martin Vanquish around Paris, flying an ultralite down canyons, driving an off-road 4x4 off some roads and taking the controls of a snowmobile, and, bizarrely, a submarine vehicle. Ninjas appear as well, Bond-san.

Helping you foil Rafael Drake's plans to hold the world hostage is female agent Zoe Nightshade, with *Nightfire* boasting a much larger cast of co-agents, conspirators and plot twists than *Agent Under Fire*. The game should be easier to navigate now too, with the plot making it a little more obvious about where to drive and what to do than last year's effort.

Cooler new Bond gadget? That'll be the Stunner – a lightning gun kinda thing, or perhaps the Suitcase Sentinel – effectively a machine gun in a bag.

The multiplayer game will boast a selection of editable bots to play against, or even alongside in the new team games, plus we were personally assured by the producer himself that despite not being based on real women, the Bond girls of *Nightfire* are extremely attractive. James Bond will return to PS2 this November.



DER-DE-DE-DE-DE The all-enhanced multiplayer action in... action.



DISCHARGE IN MY FACE Make him pay for giving facial hair a bad name.

PAY ATTENTION, READERS



WE ASKED NIGHTFIRE'S PRODUCER JOHN HORSLEY SOME QUESTIONS ABOUT THE GAME. THESE ARE HIS ANSWERS (AND OUR QUESTIONS).

PSW: What's the story this time?

John Horsley: Bond is going up against Rafael Drake who is supposed to be decommissioning nuclear weapons, helping to save the planet. Turns out he's a bad guy – he's refurbishing them to use as a personal arsenal! He steals the space shuttle and populates a space station with these missiles and holds the world hostage.

Crikey!

The finale is Bond having a zero-G laser duel with Drake in a space suit bouncing lasers off satellites back into the station, while Bond floats about outside!

Like Moonraker?

Yeah, we were inspired by *Moonraker*, *The Spy Who Loved Me*, a bit of *You Only Live Twice*... we start Bond out in Paris, we bring him to the mouth of a volcano – you actually drive up the volcano and end up flying down this canyon in an ultralite, we have space levels, we bring him down below the sea in caverns in the [submersible!] Aston Martin Vanquish, we have him snowmobiling...

Will there be many recognisable sections for movie fans?

It's all original, sort of 'inspired by'... we didn't copy anything apart from the characters. In multiplayer we have Odd Job and Jaws, oh, and we have copied some of the sets... we have Fort Knox from *Goldfinger* in multiplayer...

Do the Bond people mind you creating your own stuff? Is there anything they've said no to?

Well... James Bond doesn't chew gum! So you can't use a stick of gum as a gadget, it's just these little idiosyncrasies of the character or his world... he does a lot of kissing in this one! He kisses everybody! He kisses all his female co-stars, he kisses the people he rescues, he's very amorous!

And it's the real Mr Brosnan in the game this time?

Yeah. We went to Pinewood while he was filming. We bought in these laser systems to etch his face! We take photographs, we say 'Hey Pierce! Look deadly, smile, look focused, raise your eyebrow!' and record it, so he was like a puppet for us!

Did you motion capture him kissing?

No, for the recording of the kissing we used a stunt double.

What's the coolest new Bond toy?

Some people play it stealthy and really like the infra-red glasses. The same guys tend to like the camera that picks out motion... other guys are more rock & roll, they like the Stunner. A blue bolt comes out and shakes 'em! We've got the laser, the grapple, some jetpack stuff...

Jetpacks! Everyone loves jetpacks!

Yeah, we have some multiplayer stuff set in zero-G... you'll see what happens!

Tell us more about Nightfire's multiplayer options...

Well last year we didn't have bots. This year we do, you can adjust their personality, speed, aggression. It'll be four player, a mix of players and bots. There are missions to play as a team or solo, finding things, defending the base...

Any special multiplayer weapons?

Have you seen the gondola fight?! [No, we haven't - Ed.] At the end of a level you end up fighting a helicopter with a guided missile launcher. You can launch this bad boy in multiplayer then fly around looking for someone to hit! They can see this missile coming right until it smacks 'em!

What's the best improvement you've made in Nightfire?

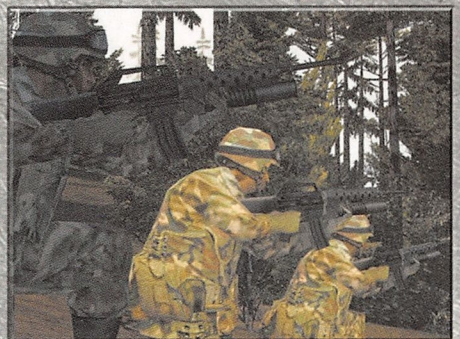
The visual effects. We have snow, rain, we've got lighting changes, flashes. The bots are very good, the more exotic racing stuff. We have four times as many rewards as in *Agent Under Fire*, more upgrades for gadgets and guns...

Did you ever consider including link up options?

We were talking about it, we considered co-op games, but it's tough. We have a choice about how to deploy our team, and in the end not enough people have two PS2s or network abilities – we're talking about it for the next one...

re-con (n): the sole unit an infantry battalion relies on for intelligence operations. Arguably the most specialized and highly trained troop formation of any regiment.

If you meet them in combat...



YOU'RE ALREADY DEAD.

Prepare yourself as the PC Game of 2001 hits PS2 and Xbox in time for Christmas.

Features missions from the original PC game and the add-on, Desert Siege

Tom Clancy's

GHOST RECON™



PlayStation®2



from the makers of
RAINBOW SIX

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BEAUTIFUL BEATINGS

AFTER THE THE THING, JAMES CAMERON RETURNS TO PS2 WITH HIS HIT TV SERIES **DARK ANGEL**.

SEXY

WE HAVE TO ADMIT WE WEREN'T VERY

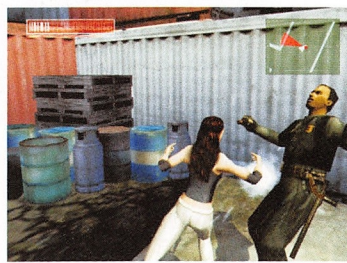
familiar with *Dark Angel* before learning of a game based on the popular American TV series. A bit of research was in order and now, having seen Max (the female lead in the series) kicking numerous arses in a range of figure-hugging, cleavage-revealing, breast-bouncing outfits, we're hooked.

The game will closely follow the show with genetically enhanced Max (no, not her chest, you lecherous lot - it's her strength and fighting abilities that have been dramatically ramped up) struggling against the corporations who rule in the future and trying to find her lost relatives.

Her special abilities and the futuristic technology will be capitalised on, giving players the opportunity to undertake a

range of missions. Some will involve stealth and the use of visual and aural tools along with slow motion powers, while others will be hand-to-hand battles involving Max's evasive techniques and fighting abilities.

Most importantly the player will get to decide how the game turns out through a number of choices so that the final outcome depends on your actions. *Dark Angel* should be with us in the next couple of months.



ACTION ADVENTURER Should fill the gap left by Buffy.



HURT ME, DADDY She's strong. Imagine the play fights.



LIKE A BAT INTO HELL

LIVING UP TO ITS NAME, **BATMAN DARK TOMORROW** IS ALREADY LOOKING DARKER THAN YOUR AVERAGE COMIC BOOK ADVENTURE.

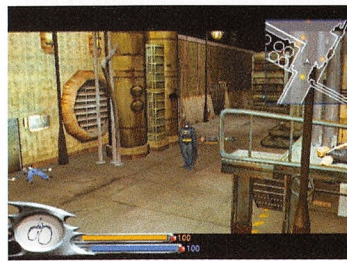
CRIME FIGHTING

COMMISSIONER JAMES GORDON HAS disappeared, the criminally insane are causing trouble in Arkham Asylum and somehow these two seemingly unrelated events are setting off alarm bells in the Bat Cave. Prepare to enter Batman's dark side as events in Gotham City take a turn for the worse. Based on the more mature adult books, there's no garish spandex suits here thankfully. *Batman Dark Tomorrow* takes you through some of the city's murkier, sinister locales.

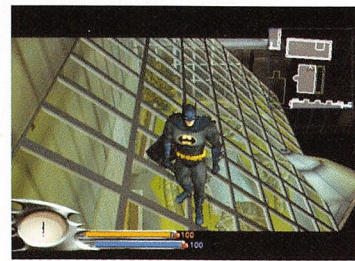
The game mirrors Solid Snake's escapades, with the caped crusader stealthily working his way through six deadly locations and ultimately infiltrating the Asylum itself. A radar in the top right hand corner helps your silent creepery but sooner or later you're gonna have to indulge in an inevitable bit of biff, splat, kerpow action. All of the usual suspects are lining up to clip your wings: The Joker, The Ratcatcher,

Mr Freeze and Poison Ivy stand between you and the solution to the mysterious goings-on in Gotham City. Access to all the usual bad gadgetry is a given, as is the

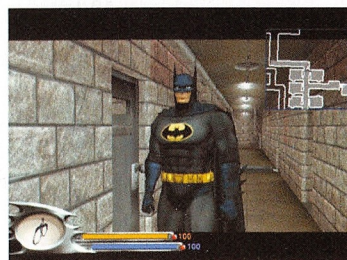
November release date. Although don't blame us if it slips. These things happen. Don't shoot the messenger etc... We'll have more next month.



CRIQUEY Batman likes to stand motionless in factories.



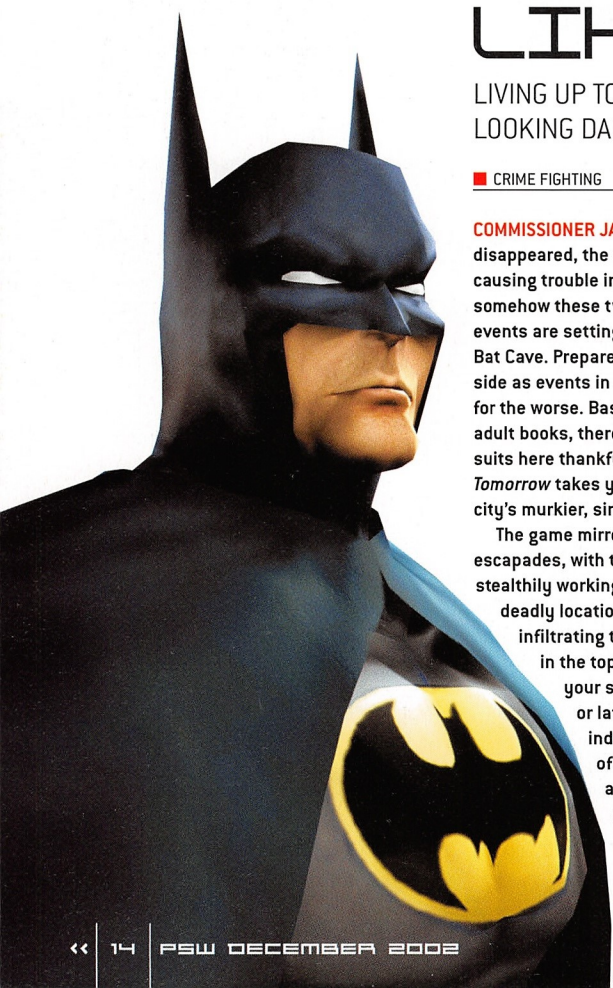
BAT DROPPING Sometimes he goes outside. Realism!



THIS DOOR IS LOCKED You need the grey Bat-key.

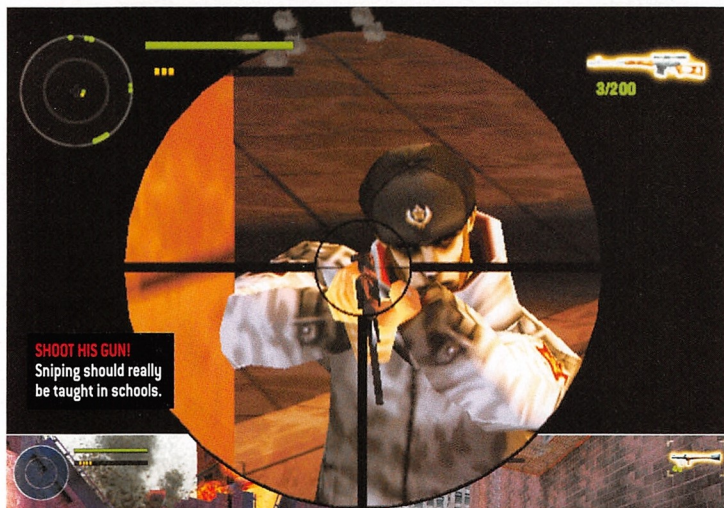


BATTERING "OK, I apologise for joking about your skin."



STAR SPANGLED PLUMBER

A MAN SAVES THE US BY BEING MORE AMERICAN THAN ANYONE ELSE IN
FREEDOM: THE BATTLE FOR LIBERTY ISLAND.



SHOOT HIS GUN!
Sniping should really be taught in schools.



TRACK HIM DOWN And probably kill him. Make friends! No.



ON RAILS The old fallen bridge blocking your way trick.



LOVE IS ALL AROUND Fight above and below ground.



QUIET, TOO QUIET Something will explode soon, surely.

■ GODDAM ROOSKIES

FREEDOM: THE BATTLE FOR LIBERTY

Island is a timely, though ultimately fantastical, exploration of war in the US. More specifically New York, around the Statue of Liberty itself, but this does not concern fanatical terrorist groups or hapless airliners. The game takes place in a continuum where the Soviet Union won the Cold War (which presumably turned hot again) and the Red Army is marching on the States. A nuclear device has exploded in Washington – the people believe the President is dead. A new leader is needed, one that can unite them against the Red Menace. That'll be you, then.

Or you as Christopher Walker (you don't get much closer than that), to be more precise. Walker is apparently a mild mannered plumber who, completely unlike Mario, is 'obsessed with finding and freeing his brother'. Then overcharging him massively for materials he didn't use, presumably. As Walker you must throw down your pack of Winnie Blues, hoist the back of your jeans and create an army to fight for the very streets of New York. The ability to recruit is based on a charisma system, where points are gained for heroic deeds and lost for letting men die.

Intriguingly, the whole thing's divided between a turn-based strategic fight in the sewers and an all-out action-fest above ground. Walker will visibly change as he grows into his new role, and The Big Apple will gradually rot as the war progresses. You can fight for freedom come Christmas.

GLOBALINSIDER

SMALL DROPLETS OF FACT ON THE WINDOW PANE OF NEWS



/ HEAR ME NOW

Jester, the originator of PlayStation sonic soundscape sequencing, has added some novel features to the forthcoming PS2 upgrade *Music 3*. Wannabe DJs or bedroom knob twiddlers can mix a suitably huge selection of 10,000 samples and mix live tracks on the fly via six turntables. Best of all, gamers may now engage in all-new and all-embarassing Eminem-esque karaoke sessions with the USB microphone add on. Recorded samples can then be saved to memory card and altered so you sound as good as Blazin' Squad. Will it be MTV badged as with *Music Generator 2*? That's still undecided.



/ A BUG'S LIFE

Zapper is the latest safe platformer aimed at satisfying parents too afraid to buy their son *GTA Vice City* for Christmas. *Zapper* is a cricket who needs to 'zap' enemies with his antennae in order to rescue his brother Zipper. The formulaic platform action includes traditional wild west and jungle levels as well as four player mini games. Should *Rayman* be worried? Should we even pretend to care?

WIN!

SPIDERMAN: THE MOVIE

■ COMPETITION

Spiderman is the coolest superhero who doesn't wear his underpants on the outside. Sure, the competition ain't exactly heavy, but we'd take him over, erE the other superhero who doesn't wear his underpants on the outside any day. You've seen the terrific film, probably played the slightly above average PS2 game, and read our review of the Collector's Edition DVD on page 92. Now you want to own it for yourself. We've got five Spiderman packs to give away, each containing the two-disc set, a hat, t-shirt and watch.

To be in the running to win, just write your answer to the following question on the back of an envelope:

Q. What's the Green Goblin's real name?

Send your entry to:
Sticky Goo Comp
PSW
78 Renwick St
Redfern NSW 2016
Australia



FATALITIES ON PS2

MORTAL KOMBAT: DEADLY ALLIANCE IS VIRTUALLY HERE TO TAKE ON **TEKKEN**. IT'LL SOON BE TIME TO FINISH HIM.

■ VIOLENT

MORTAL KOMBAT IS THE LAST OF THE BIG name fighters to make the move to three gorgeous dimensions but it's looking like the wait might just have been worth it. We had a brief play with it at ECTS and the new 3D arenas are looking terrific while the customary flesh-ripping gameplay is just as bloodthirsty as ever.

Just watching others play this game provides endless amusement thanks to the ludicrously violent and extremely OTT attacks that each of the contenders can unleash. That's before the finishing move fatalities take the goriness to another level with heads exploding in a blinding

cloud of sloshing claret and spines being ripped out of bodies. The blood even forms shiny pools on the floor that can be trodden in and spread about the arena by your squelching feet.

Each character comes equipped with a weapon that can be chosen by selecting one of the three stances available. It almost felt like *Soul Calibur* as we slashed our blades about with malicious abandon. Each stance can be selected with ease during battle enabling you to quickly switch between your offal covered blade and your bone crunching fists. All we need to know now is whether its unique talents can stand up to current kings *Virtua Fighter 4* and *Tekken 4*.



SCORPION RISING Jax... did he used to be a contender?



MEET THE NEW GIRL Li Mei... is she new, or was she in...



DIDN'T HE... Kano? Was he the one with the metal arms?



STEVE? IAN? Ahh! Sub Zero! We definitely remember him.

IT'S NOT A BIRD OR A PLANE

NOR IS IT JUST ANOTHER CEL-SHADED SUPER HERO. IT'S THE ONE AND ONLY **SUPERMAN**. AND HE'S HERE TO SAVE US.

■ STEELY

THE MAN OF STEEL ARRIVES ON PS2 IN

what is becoming something of a standard for the super hero brigade. Once again it's a cel-shaded world that our comic book champion has to save from cel-shaded villains. All of his familiar skills can be employed to prevent arch enemy Lex Luthor unleashing Apokoliptian weaponry upon the good citizens of Metropolis. For those of you not overly familiar with Superman's all-too lengthy list of adversaries, Apokolips is a hellish planet far out in space, which is providing Luthor with the advanced technology needed to construct a robot army.

Being based on the cartoon programme has given the developer access to the vocal talents of Lori Petty, Michael York and Malcolm MacDowell, as well as the locations that have featured in the series. The cityscape is huge with skyscrapers towering high above the traffic below.

Superman comes equipped with a vast array of skills including x-ray vision, heat vision, freezing breathe, and of course his super strength. You can also hover in the air as well as fly, making air bound punch-ups a distinct possibility. This one has been kicking around for ages now, so expect something resembling a review in the next one or two issues.



HELP, SUPERMAN Lex Luthor's taken the surface textures.



METRO CITY Not much happens in the air. Ooh, birds.



TEENAGE RAMPAGE

MILITARY MAN LOSES MEMORY, UNCOVERS CONSPIRACY, EMBARKS UPON MISSION TO RIGHT WRONGS. IN A TOTALLY NON-OFFENSIVE CARTOON STYLE! WELCOME TO THE WORLD OF XIII.

■ DRAWING FIRE

IT'S PRONOUNCED "THIRTEEN" NOT "ECKS one one one" just in case you were wondering. *XIII* (hey, it's easier to write) is a cel-shaded (hey, it's easier to design) first-person shooter (hey, it's easier to program) from Ubi Soft. *Amnesia* is the plot device (sigh) with the star of the game waking up alone on a beach, with the only clue to his identity being the XIII tattoo on his shoulder.

Cue an adventure to find out who he is, how he ended up on the beach with no memory (he got massively drunk on tequila and vodka shots, most likely) and what's going on with the grainy videotape that shows the US President being shot. 37 missions spread out over eight levels then ensue, with stealth taking on an important role – *XIII* features harpoons, crossbows and throwing knives for those moments when firing off an AK-47 would be considered impolite.

The lead character gradually discovers he's part of a conspiracy and has some awesome commando abilities, with players taking on the mission of finding out who he is and what's happening. He knows how to use a sniper rifle, that's for sure. *XIII* will be out early next year, probably on the 13th day of a month for publicity purposes.



HAND IT TO HIM At least the pistol actually does some damage.



TALK TO ME, BABY Thwack! The sound is very visual. Um...



MGS XIII "Cel shade everything. Yes, gulls too."



BACK AT THE SHARP END

A NEW **BROKEN SWORD** FOR ANY FULLY FUNCTIONING PLAYSTATION2.

■ MYSTERIOUS

SAY WELCOME BACK TO AN OLD FRIEND.

Broken Sword returns for a third instalment of murder, intrigue and newly added action. The *Broken Sword* titles form one of the most fondly remembered gaming series ever. Although you might not be overly familiar with them as it was quite some time since the last one

appeared on PSone. However, thanks to the first game's recent release on the Game Boy Advance reviving interest in the exploits of George Stobbard and Nico Collard once again, *Revolution* has decided to get the clan back together for a new adventure on PS2.

Broken Sword: The Sleeping Dragon sees a radical departure from the game's point 'n' click heritage for a 21st

century *Tomb Raider*-esque makeover. The world is now presented in 3D and you're given full control over George's movement rather than merely selecting a direction for him to move in and objects to look at as back in the old days. Now it's all accurately modelled cities and realistically animated characters, as *Broken Sword* reinvents itself for the *Metal Gear Solid* generation.

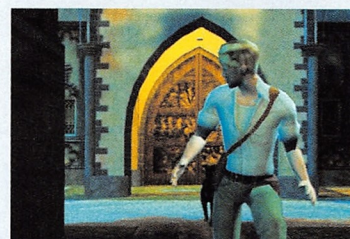
The storyline is being kept under wraps but we'd put our money on lost worlds and the Knights Templar turning up somewhere along George and Nico's journey. We'll have more on this classic update soon.



DOWN, BOY "If I can just balance like Lara Croft I'll be OK"



A LOAD OF B.S. "Yes, I am a bit like Lara Croft, aren't I?"



DA MAN "Yes, I am a bit like a male Lara Croft, aren't I?"



HOT MALE ACTION How does Lara run around like this?



REACH UP "I can make it. If Lara Croft can so can I!"

otaku Alley

TOKYO GAMES SHOW 2002 SPECIAL!

For many, the Tokyo Games Show is the most significant event on the gaming calendar. E3 may boast the hype and a cross-section of the globe's publishers and developers, but the TGS is where Japan's best – and, hence, the world's best – choose to show off their upcoming titles. We caught glimpses of such anticipated games as *Devil May Cry 2*, *Silent Hill 3* and the gorgeous *Auto Modellista*. Here's a selection of tasty screens out of the show to whet your appetite for the months ahead. Enjoy!



AUTO MODELLISTA

● TYPE: Racing
● PUBLISHER: Capcom



TAILGATING Capcom happily vow to sod realism and just make it look really cool. Nice!



NIGHT RIDER Still awaiting news of whether the PAL version includes link-up play.



MELLOW YELLOW As *Burnout 2* proves, racing games are best when they're simply fun.



SPEED RACER Our concern is it's often hard to see the next corner before it's too late.

devil may cry 2

● TYPE: Action
● PUBLISHER: Capcom



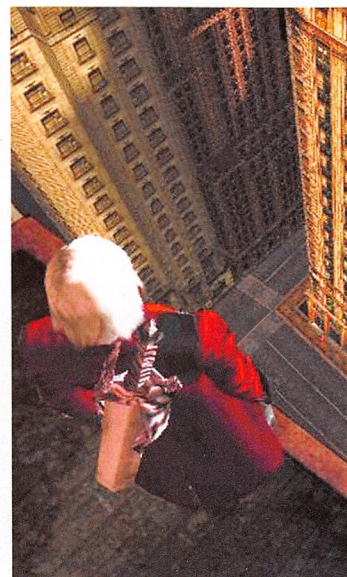
DRAGGING THEIR KNUCKLES Has Dante suddenly stepped into *Silent Hill* minus the fog?



TOWERING A moment of reflection.



STAGGERING Looks like a freak gust of wind.



Red Dead Revolver

● TYPE: Shooter
● PUBLISHER: Capcom



DOFFING HIS HAT "Mornin' ma'am. Why did the streets empty as soon as I arrived?"



RED DEAD DESERT Riding off into the sunset. To his doom, one presumes.



shinobi

● TYPE: Action
● PUBLISHER: Sega



CLIMBING UP THE WALLS The hilarious effect of putting flour on your windscreen wipers.



BLUE STREAK Sucked into the void.



SLICED Don't ever say I look like Razeel.

zone of the enders 2

● TYPE: Action
● PUBLISHER: Konami



PYROTECHNICA Nice fireworks display, but what the f*** is going on?



DITTO Still no idea...



GOT IT! It's a fight, isn't it? Yeah?



OTAKUINSIDER



ARMORED CORE 3

Type: Action

Publisher: From Software



BREATH OF FIRE: DRAGON QUARTER

Type: RPG

Publisher: Capcom



GALLOP RACER 6

Type: Sports

Publisher: Tecmo



GUILTY GEAR XX

Type: Fighting

Publisher: Arc Systems



LOWRIDER

Type: Rhythm Action

Publisher: PCCW



SHADOW TOWER

Type: Action Adventure

Publisher: TBA

OTAKUINSIDER



STAR OCEAN 3

Type: RPG
Publisher: Enix



TAIKO NO TATSUJIN

Type: Rhythm Action
Publisher: Taito



TALES OF DESTINY 2

Type: RPG
Publisher: Namco



UNLIMITED SAGA

Type: RPG
Publisher: Square

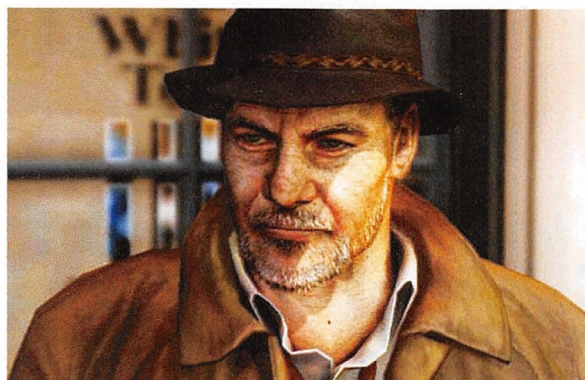


VIRTUAL ON MARZ

Type:
Publisher:



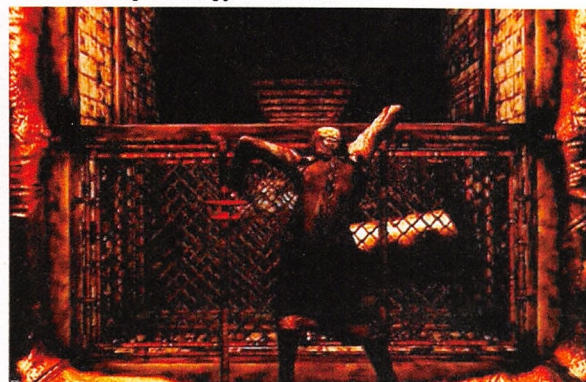
silent hill 3



GRIZZLY ADAMS He'll turn into your worst nightmare in a sec, mark my words.



SUNDAY DRIVE Ever get the feeling you've been here before?



Tenchu 3



BIG HEAD MODE Now, bend over and accept your punishment.



BAM-BOO! It's a ghost on the bridge.



EXCLAMATION Pleased to meet you.

starcraft: ghost



SQUAT THRUSTS I can do my silly exercises up here without fear of ridicule.



TYPE: Action
PUBLISHER: Blizzard

ROBOTTECH

FINALLY THE ANIME SERIES THAT STARTED IT ALL, ON DVD!

US chart-topper!

"Robotech was definitely one of the best shows on TV during its time..."

Anime News Network

"The most astounding science fiction saga ever told - featuring action packed state of the art animation!" **Animejin**



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- Audio commentary of Robotech's history by developer Carl Macek
- Robotech International - scenes from various international versions of Robotech
- Codename: Robotech - a home video premiere of a feature-length compilation that was given to stations prior to the series regular timeslot
- Full Screen (Standard) - 1.33:1
- Available Audio Tracks: English (Dolby Digital 2.0)



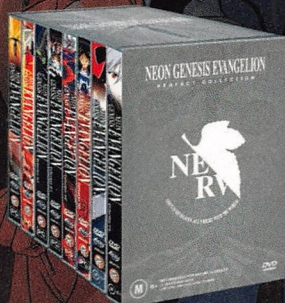
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BY THE WRITER AND DIRECTOR OF
NINJA SCROLL & WICKED CITY

NEON GENESIS EVANGELION COLLECTION BOX SET



**Finally yours to own in
ONE PERFECT COLLECTION!**
8 DVDS and 10 hours of Neon Genesis



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- Animation Planet

"There has never been a better anime series than Evangelion."
- A4+2 Gamelan

Hellsing

In the name of God, impure souls of the living dead shall be banished into eternal damnation. Amen.

The worst enemy of the night is one of their own...

A secret war is brewing in the night - a war in which humanity is only a pawn. The mysterious Hellsing Organization deploys within the shadows to protect ordinary mortals from the undead legions that would prey upon us.

Animated By Japan's Famed Gonzo Studios

"...you won't find a better horror series on the market today." **Anime News Network**

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VAMPIRE HUNTER D

BLOODJUST

The tables turned,
The secrets revealed,
And the hunters have become the Hunted.
This is Vampire Hunter D -
And all is not as it seems...

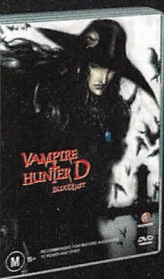
"Striking visual ideas and an intriguing concept that blends the look and loner ethos of a Sergio Leone western with the crumbling, gothic settings of a Mario Bava horror film."

-New York Times

"If you appreciate fine animation and edgy material, this blood's for you." - Desson Howe, Washington Post

DVD SPECIAL FEATURES:

- Behind the scenes Featurette
- Storyboard to Feature Comparison
- Dolby Digital 5.1



Dialogue



WANTED: YOUR OPINION ON ANY TOPIC SOMEHOW RELATED TO VIDEOGAMING ON THE PS2. THANKS.



/NOT-SO-BIG

I'm replying to your question in the October issue. I do have a multi-tap. I'm the only person I know who has one, but it's definitely worth it with *Timesplitters*. Now the second one is coming out, I think that will be one of the best games on PS2 (*So do we - Ed*). I think *Micro Machines V3* was bloody brilliant. *Team Buddies* was a not-so-big title, but it was great in multiplayer. Well I got to go.

Kosta Gravanis
via email

Who'd be willing to bet against the PS3 having four controller ports built-in as standard? Not us, that's for sure.

/NEED A KIDNEY

I own a PC. Don't hate me, this is going somewhere. I have just bought 256MB of memory for it. The memory cost me \$120. That's \$120 for 256MB of memory. An 8MB PlayStation2 memory card costs \$70. How can they get away with this? Why don't they just come round to my house with a van and take everything I own as well? Would the president of Sony like to come round and be pleased by my sister as well? Need a kidney? I've got two just lying about my body, take them too. We are being ripped off. I demand an investigation!

Alan Bryant
via email

You're not just paying for the memory, you're also paying for the tiny black plastic casing and those two little metal screws. Those stickers aren't cheap, either.

/SHODDY CONVERSIONS

In my view Sega's multi-format promises haven't lived up to what they were meant to be. All PS2 gets is shoddy conversions of ancient arcade games



TIME CRISIS 2: Fabulous i-Link fun, according to reader Peter.



/HE MAY HAVE DIED!

I am writing in to express my hatred for one of your writers. It is Steven Williams. I just wanna tell you how he sux because he keeps dissing F1. A perfect example of this is in the last issue. I read the review on *V8 Supercars* in the newsagent (*Cheers! - Ed*) and I saw written straightaway, "Formula One should die". Well let me tell you this, if F1 weren't around, he may have died! Does he realise what F1 has contributed to the motor industry? Carbon fibre, ABS, traction control, enhanced seatbelts, and need I go on? FORMULA 1 IS VITAL FOR ROAD CAR SAFETY, AND TOURING CAR RACING!

Anyway, the point is, if he calls himself a racing expert (and he obviously does) he should love Formula One. Sure F1 is going through a bit of a boring period, with Ferrari's domination and all. But if it weren't for F1, there would be no Grands Prix as we know them today. Well, that's all I wanted to say. Thanks, and I hope you took notice and fired him (joke) or at least got more of a racing purist to review racing games.

Julian Fernandez
via email

P.S. You should buy him a joke book, because his jokes really suck! Oh yeah, and just between you and me, everything he writes annoys the shit outta me, to be quite frank.

Steven may have exaggerated somewhat to make his point, but it was a point worth making. In its current state, F1 is unremittingly tedious – not simply due to Schuey's invincibility, but the fact that no one ever passes anyone. Still, no matter how dull the racing is, at least it's not quite as painful as discussion of technical aspects like ABS and traction control. What makes for better gameplay, the bash-and-barge of touring cars or tinkering with gear ratios in the McLaren garage?

/LONG FUTURE AHEAD

Keep up the good work people! Your writing resembles what OPSM used to be before it became a corporate a\$\$-licking hype mag. Your magazine is funny, honest, and the DVD video is awesome. (How about playable demos? No big deal if you can't get them.) Nicely done lads, hope you have a long future ahead of you. Meanwhile, I'll be at my newsagent every month to buy your mag.

Shalgrothian Nightmare
via email

Cheers, Shal (or is it Mr Nightmare?). Due to licensing stipulations, we can't include playable demos on our DVD. But this frees up the space for us to bring you more footage of more games before anyone else. If you saw it first, you saw it on the PSW DVD.

/LOVE THE I-LINK

I've had a PS2 for about 12 months and love the i-Link facility on *GT3* and *Time Crisis 2*, but there doesn't seem to be any other games that support it. Do you know why? And are there any that I may have missed or that are still to come?

Peter,
W.A.

P.S. Great to see an Aussie PS2 mag, our release dates and prices!

It's disappointing, but understandable that few developers make use of this potentially excellent feature. The main reason seems to be that it's a waste of time coding for a feature that only a tiny percentage of gamers (those who own two PS2s plus the required cable) will ever utilise. Same goes for the multi-tap...

SHORT CUTS

Loved the gold cover of *PSW#4*. Will it be worth anything in the future?
Mitchell Ward
via email

Thanks. Nostalgia is priceless.

Will *The Getaway* come with a London street directory? How else will we non-Pommie gamers find our way round?
Sophie Enckelman
via email

We certainly hope so.

I bought *Midnight Club* Platinum edition three days before I read your 2/10 review.
Ken Northcott
via email

Bugger.

I'd like to offer to Daniel Staines my services as a hairdresser. I am fully qualified and specialise in fixing follicular follies.
Kelly Tommasi
via email

We accept on his behalf.
[Naaa! - DS]



SEND YOUR THOUGHTS TO:
Dialogue
PSW
78 Renwick St,
Redfern NSW 2016.
psw@next.com.au

which have already had sequels on the Dreamcast. Who wants *Crazy Taxi* when you can get a second-hand Dreamcast and *Crazy Taxi 2* for under \$100? Xbox and GameCube are getting fantastic sequels and new original titles such as *Super Monkey Ball* and *Crazy Taxi 3*. Me and my bro own a GameCube and have *Super Monkey Ball* and *Sonic Adventure 2* and own zero Sega titles on PS2. Our big bro owns an Xbox and is looking forward to *Crazy Taxi 3*. Who wants a fourth *Virtua Fighter* when you can have original titles elsewhere? Sega and PS2 are stuck in the past and can see better light elsewhere.

Iain Budgen
via email

Who wants *Virtua Fighter 4*? Everybody with an ounce of common sense, that's who. *Monkey Ball*'s cool, but hardly *Virtua Fighter* in terms of kudos. Although, to be fair, we'd rather have Xbox's *Panzer Orta*, *House of the Dead 3* or *ToeJam & Earl 3* instead of the staggeringly late conversion of *Ferrari F355*. It does indeed seem PS2 is Sega's third-choice right now. But hey, there's always *Rez*. And you can bet PS2 versions of at least a couple of those Xbox games will appear later.

/ RANDOM BORED HOUSEWIFE

To the nice blokes at PSW, who is the owner of the voice that commentates on the DVD? Is it John Dewhurst or in fact a woman? Have you ever met her, or is she some bored housewife dragged off the streets for our enjoyment? Is it coincidence she talks like you or do you write stuff for her to say? Why hasn't one of you taken her out to a drink? Come on lads, hurry up and get yer act together!

Fenton Roberts
via email

No, we've never met her. She never comes to the office, she's possibly been warned against it. Graham of our DVD department has seen her, though. He goes to a sound studio to record the commentary with her each month. We asked him about her, this is what he said, "The new voice actress is Clara or Cara Lane, can't remember which. She's short, blond-ish, looks quite innocent and can be quite feisty at times. Often appears in hippy-chick flowery outfits or black numbers. Likes to wear baggy trousers and wears a handkerchief type of thing over her hair. Shopping seems to be a favourite hobby. Her marital status is unknown. Drinks lots of water and always, always fluffs her lines." Sounds nice.

/ MAIN CHARACTER HOPS

I think the reason game storylines are so uniformly rubbish is because of their size. A film only has to fill an hour and a half, or two hours tops with interesting events, whereas a game has to stretch out many times that, often taking in a lot of different locations and events too. There can't be that many ways to explain how a main character hops from one entirely unrelated world to another, so it's no surprise the



MEDAL OF HONOR: FRONTLINE Home to a mysterious gateway to a parallel dimension. Allegedly.

usual plot devices are used time and time again. Lay off 'em, we only care about the action anyway!

Sarah Gannel
via email

We want more games set in the real world, less of this fantasy, alien planet, post-apocalyptic rubbish. We want to kill aliens in Woolies, not in some anonymous dockside warehouse. We want to race down the Parramatta Rd in peak hour, not along some imaginary track on the dark side of the Moon. We demand call centres not underground labs, local government offices not orbiting space ships, and small Queensland towns instead of futuristic Tokyo neo-scapes. Er, please.

/ RAN INTO A NAZI

I've been playing *Medal of Honor: Frontline* loads

recently, probably too much, and I seem to have found a gateway to a mysterious world. In the level 'Clipping Their Wings', launch the engine into the wall and go through, then go straight to the end of the corridor with tiles on the floor. Turn left and go up to the door with the Bazooka ammo next to it. Turn round to face the opposite wall and walk straight forward into it. You should go through. I discovered this when I ran into a Nazi enemy and pushed him through, then I followed to finish him off.

Alex Keeble
via email

Frankly we just couldn't be bothered to check if that works or not, but thanks for thinking of us and sending it in. If it does work, well done on finding it. If it doesn't, shame on you for wasting everyone's time.

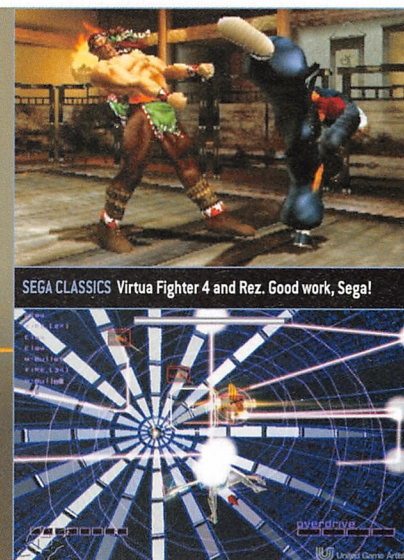
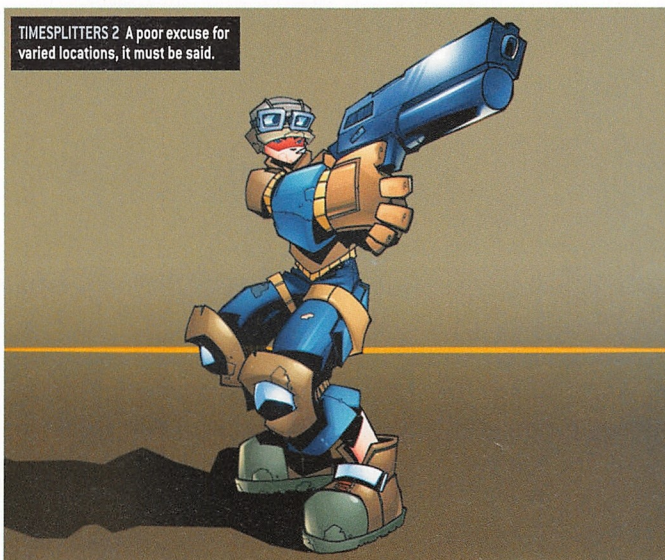
AUSTRALIA'S MOST WANTED

Drooling in anticipation? Wetting yourself with excitement? Hyperventilating with anxiety? If so, and if such undignified behaviour is solely due to waiting for a PS2 game (rather than, say, that cute girl at the bus stop), then we'd like to know about it. Email us <psw@next.com.au> and tell us which five upcoming PS2 games you desperately want to play. Each month, we'll tabulate your votes into a Top Ten list right here in this panel. Include your full name and address so we can send a prize (i.e. a game plucked from the Editor's desk) to one voter to be drawn at random. So get voting!

The first reader's chart will appear next month, so here's our selection:

1. Grand Theft Auto: Vice City
2. Silent Hill 3
3. The Getaway
4. Pro Evolution Soccer 2
5. Auto Modellista
6. Ghost Recon
7. Gio Gio's Bizarre Adventure
8. XIII
9. Bloodrayne
10. Office Cricket 2002/03

TIMESPLITTERS 2 A poor excuse for varied locations, it must be said.



SEGA CLASSICS Virtua Fighter 4 and Rez. Good work, Sega!

ANOTHER RING TO RULE THEM ALL

MEET THE OTHER GAME BASED ON THOSE BOOKS WITH THE ORCS IN THEM. THIS ONE'S EVEN GOT THE BLESSING OF THE MAN HIMSELF, J.R.R. TOLKIEN.

WORDS / JOHN DEWHURST

In PSW #4, we had a look at EA's *Lord of the Rings: The Two Towers* (The Movie Game), a 3D third person action-adventure that chronicles the journey of a multiracial sortee across the green and brown lands of Middle Earth. And here we are two issues later looking at Vivendi's *The Fellowship of the Ring* (The Book Game), a 3D third person action-adventure that chronicles the journey of a multiracial sortee across the green and brown lands of Middle Earth. The former has the affiliation with, blessing and support of

Peter Jackson's films, the latter exclusive access to materials from Tolkien's books. Despite that distinction, somehow similarities between the two are many. Now, just months ahead of the "which Ring game is this?" debate set to take hold at Christmas, we spoke with Jeff Nackbaur, Production Coordinator at Universal Interactive and Black Label Games about distinguishing one's hot game property in today's highly competitive and crowded market.



BRIGHT SPARK That's some very un-Gandalf-like behaviour.



UNTIMELY DEMISE A dead undead. Er... Or something like that.



"THEY MIGHT BE SURPRISED BECAUSE WE STICK TO THE BOOK VERY CLOSELY"

FANTASY AND RPG GAMES HAVE BEEN SO INFORMED BY THE WORK OF TOLKIEN, WHAT ARE SOME OF THE GAME INFLUENCES ON FELLOWSHIP OF THE RING?

As far as the gameplay is concerned, it's heavily influenced by games like *Zelda* – the lighter RPG approach: the single character that's very action oriented, but also adventure focused, with some RPG item elements. It's a simple RPG or adventure game in a way. It's not necessarily the hardcore type of experience but that is something we are looking into for the future. This allows us to reach out to a large group of people who are familiar with that type of game. With this game we want to focus on the big quest, and open that up.

THE STORY OF THE LORD OF THE RINGS IS SO WELL-KNOWN. IS THAT A BENEFIT OR A HINDRANCE?

It can be both. As far as being a benefit, it means we don't have to spend so much time on certain things, like writing the

story, because they're so familiar. But at the same time, you're bound by that story. We can't alter the content to make a game; we must work around what's there. You can't really surprise people with this story: most people know that when Gandalf goes to the bridge Kazad-Dum, he's going to fall. And the movie even doubles that, with a much larger audience knowing that. Maybe they believe he's fallen to his death, whatever. There's a much larger audience that knows the story well...

OR KNOWS THE FILM'S VERSION OF THE STORY WELL.

Right. They might be surprised by *Fellowship of the Ring* because we stick to the book very closely, so any of those differences are going to jump out at them. It's difficult to create the excitement of reading the book for the first time in a lot of ways, so I don't think that's really the point. It's more about creating that character experience in the world of Middle Earth and letting you fall into it for a little while. People know where it's going, they want to get through areas and levels to see those story elements unfold.

PARTY OF THREE

Fellowship of the Ring focuses exclusively on the adventures in the first book of the *Lord of the Rings* trilogy. That is, from Hobbiton through Bywater to Rivendell and Moria and finally to the dramatic cliffhanger of Amun Muel. Players control a single character in successive missions, at times acting alone, at times with AI "wingmen" to join the battle – other members of the Fellowship. As in EA's game, three characters take the limelight – but a different three. Here we have Frodo, Aragorn and Gandalf.

The preview version we played showed a dusk assault on Weathertop. Who lead the charge against the swarms of Wargs and other creatures? The heavy combat sections of the game have Aragorn in front, with his trusty reforged Anduril as well as bow and arrow. Most of the time he is controlled from a third-person perspective so to demonstrate his various of sword attacks [when the directions of the D-pad are combined with attack]. Aragorn can also make of a first-person perspective to fire arrows. Add to that a block ability and Aragorn has an arsenal of attack with which to waylay any enemy.

If Aragorn is the Fighter, then Frodo is the Thief, a stealthy character. He's shithouse in a fight but his size and a family heirloom makes him perfect for evasion. Gandalf is the magic user and his missions combine puzzle solving with combat. He's somewhere between Frodo and Aragorn because he is pretty good with a sword but uses magic to progress. The missions Frodo stars in promise different challenges to those of the other two, with more evasion and environmental interaction. When Frodo puts on the Ring, his vision goes into negative with distorted colours.



BAD KNIGHT The campfire sing-along ended in tears.



SHOW OFF He goes to extravagant length for a light.



SHADOW BOXING But with swords. And real opponents.



REAR ATTACK Frodo attempts to gas the orcs to death.



THINGS YOU WON'T SEE IN FELLOWSHIP OF THE RING

EXTENDED DISCUSSIONS OVER THE HOBBITS' LOVE OF WEED



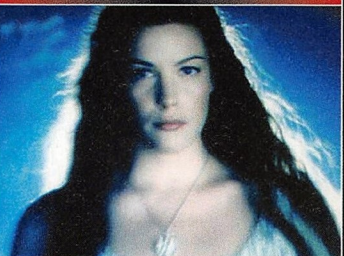
HUGO WEAVING



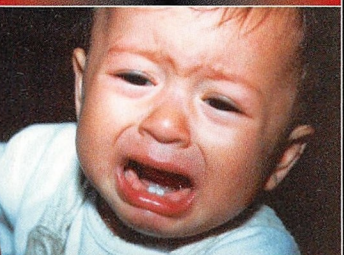
SAM AND FRODO "KEEPING WARM" DURING THE COLD NIGHTS IN MORDOR



SOME HOLLYWOOD HUSSY REPLACING GLORFINDEL, THE FASTEST RIDER IN THE LAND



HOBBITS CRYING EVERY BLOODY FIVE MINUTES



GREEN GOBLINS Gandalf shows Frodo how to gas an orc good and proper.

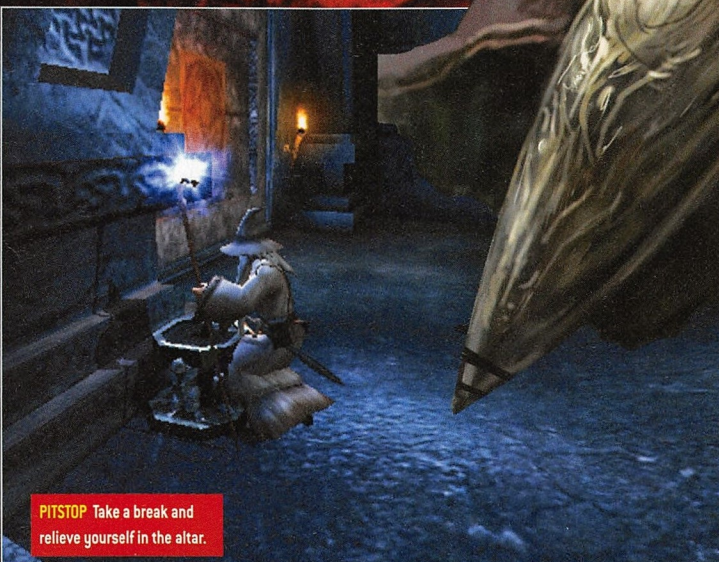


TELL US ABOUT THE RING.

Well, it serves a couple of purposes. Of course, it's central to the plot and its journey is the whole reason for the Fellowship. More than that, it allows Frodo to become invisible which serves his stealthy mission style. It allows his senses to be sharper and he can find secrets when wearing it. But we wanted to discourage people from wearing the Ring non-stop. From the story we know that one "Hobbit" has already been consumed by the Ring, namely Gollum. Frodo has a gauge on screen that tells his influence under the Ring. If worn too much, Frodo is overcome by it.

WHAT ARE SOME OF THE MOMENTS THAT WILL SURPRISE PEOPLE WHO HAVE SEEN THE FILM BUT NOT READ THE BOOK?

You start off in the Shire, from there you go into the Old Forest and fight Old Man Willow — there's an entire storyline that occurs before Aragorn meets the Hobbits that players may not know. There's the fact of Tom Bombadil's presence and the whole episode with the Barrow Wights. So you get to just explore and spend time with Frodo and Merry, Pippin and Sam. There's a great deal of detail there. There are little things that are only inferred in the book that we've expanded upon in the game but we never contradict the book. We had to create specific magic for Gandalf, for example. We make sure we adhere to the book as much as possible. There's been tweaking here and there to



PITSTOP Take a break and relieve yourself in the altar.

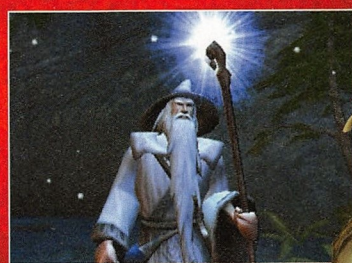




DICING WITH DEATH Ooh, that arrow is sticking straight out of his back!



HIRSUTES YOU SIR One beard to rule them all, perhaps?



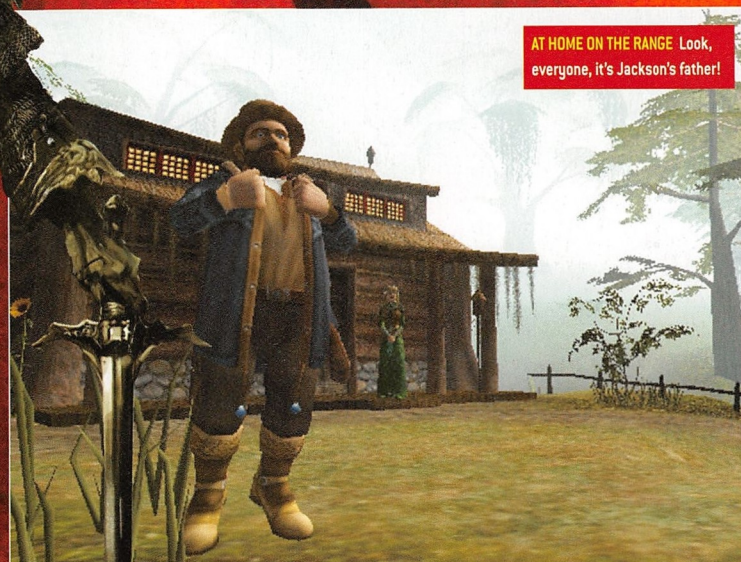
GUIDING LIGHT Old age does diminish your eyesight.



RUN LIKE HELL Aragorn turns to flee like the big girl he is.



HOBBITON DERBY Who'd win a foot race between Frodo and a Ring Wraith? Hmm.



AT HOME ON THE RANGE Look, everyone, it's Jackson's father!

accommodate for gameplay, so people will see things they don't expect.

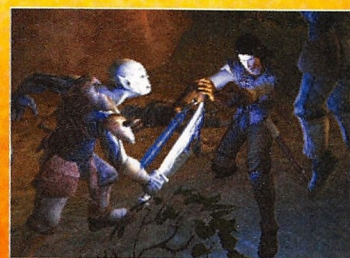
HOW DOES THE TEAM FEEL ABOUT THE FILM? IN OTHER WORDS, COULD YOU EXPLAIN THE LICENSE SITUATION FOR THE LORD OF THE RINGS?

As far as the team is concerned, and myself personally, we love the film. The changes to the story might be unfortunate, but were necessary to put it on the big screen. We have complete access to the books; the film did also, but they made their changes. We're not bound by what they did. I guess we feel a lot more room to move with our project – what we can do in this story. In a way though, we were really worried about the movie's influence. Even if you don't think of it consciously, the movies create an image in your head, even if you've read the books a hundred times. We had to combat that. So we created a style guide – 12,000 pages of images and text that sets out our unique vision of the world that we were creating. We had up to 30 artists who conceptualised every single character, environment, weapons, armour, orc and elf.

“WHEN FRODO PUTS ON THE RING, HIS VISION GOES INTO NEGATIVE WITH DISTORTED COLOURS”



THOUSAND YARD STARE The hobbits group for their hug.



MINE'S BIGGER Comparing swordhood with an orc.



A GRISLY SIGHT His armpits, that is. Not his face.



WITH THE LICENSE IN MIND, WHO IS THE GAME AIMED AT: A SLICE OF THE MOVIE AUDIENCE OR THE MORE LITERATE GAMER?

The Tolkien fan is a big part of it. We want them ultimately to be the judge of the game. If they like the game, we know that we've hit the right mark. If they don't then we know we'll need to change it next time around. Obviously, you can't please everyone but if we want to please anyone, it's the hardcore Tolkien fan. We're also aware of the people who saw the movie and want to know more. There's a three-hour movie but there's still a whole lot more detail there, so they can explore something that they don't know yet.

HAVE YOU TRIED TO GIVE SOME FREEDOM IN EXPLORATION, ESPECIALLY CONSIDERING HOW LINEAR THE STORY IS?

There are some exploratory experiences. The game varies depending on which character you are using. You start out in the Shire and think that every quest there is optional: doing a chore for someone, that kind of thing. They all give you benefits but they're not essential. Players feel like they can explore the world in these places. There are other areas where the game is necessarily linear. Start here to go to there and battle through enemies in between. So we've made a combination of the two, to give some exploration as well as action.

EA vs VIVENDI

SO TELL ME WHAT'S DIFFERENT AGAIN?

VIVENDI SAYS

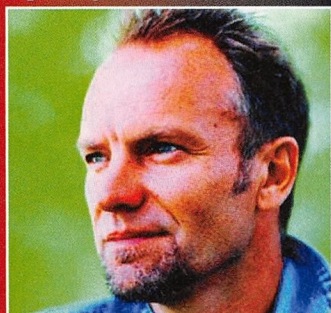
"Mine's official and hence yours is mere Hollywood pap. A pox on you!"

FEATURES:

Special Ability flavoured Action/Adventure
Three main players from the Fellowship: Frodo, Gandalf and Aragorn
You get to use the Ring
Spend time in the country

FELLOWSHIP OF THE RING IS MOST LIKE:

Singer: Sting



Some pretense to intellect but can still swing.

EA SAYS

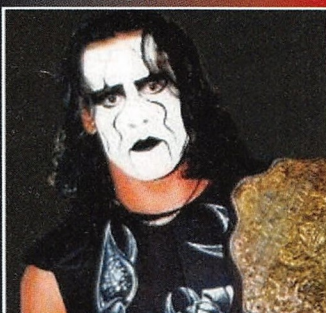
"Mine will officially be on every box of Coco Pops in the country. Suuuuck."

FEATURES:

Swarming Orc flavoured Action Heroes from the Fellowship with the biggest weapons: Aragorn, Legolas and Gimli
You get to use Legolas
Spend time in Moria

THE TWO TOWERS IS MOST LIKE:

Wrestler: Sting

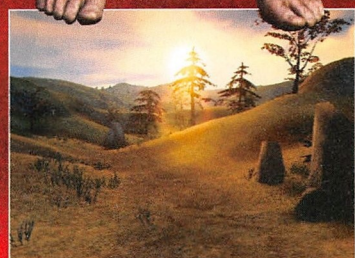


Dapper Digs but is violence enough?



MAKE MINE A DOUBLE Mark up another orc to the tally.

WHAT A POSEUR You're not king yet, so get moving!



VIVID VISTA Sun sets on another day of high adventure.



VALLEY OF DEATH Can't we just t-orc about it?



JACKSONVILLE This is where Jackson lives. Honest!



LOWLIGHT VISION This pic is too dark to caption.

WHAT CAN YOU TELL US ABOUT YOUR TOLKIEN SCHOLAR?

Everything has to go through Tolkien Enterprises. They recommended to us a Tolkien expert who they've used in the past, named Daniel Greenberg. He was probably our primary resource throughout the course of the game. He has a gaming background himself so he was able to give us suggestions in game terms.

One minor example of his input involves basic health items. Instead of using a health potion, characters would use Miravor? or lembas, that kind of thing. Little things like that make it uniquely Tolkien. It serves the same purpose but it's a little more true to the books. Another one is breaking containers, every game has them.

CRATES!

Yeah or barrels of something. We didn't want you to be able to go around breaking things or stealing other people's stuff... it

doesn't seem like something a hobbit would do. We give you the option but it's going to hurt you, there are consequences for your actions. It works into the whole idea of the cleansing of corruption and things turning evil over time. It's like that one line that Gandalf says, "Nothing starts out evil." We wanted to work that theme into the game.

CAN YOU SEE EA AND VIVENDI ENDING UP IN COURT OVER THE GAMES?

We're drawing from the same text, so naturally EA will look at our stuff. I've had comments from people who've seen our game who say, "That looks kind of like this or that" and the thing is, we'd had our art done long before that. Gandalf in particular is such an iconic figure, there's such an image created by him. You can't differ too much from that vision of him and still get Gandalf. He was a long white beard, grey cloak, bluish hat and that's who he is. Realistically, the style guide established our direction very early on the process so I don't really foresee any problems.

AWAITING EVIDENCE

Unable to coax Jeff into badmouthing his industry competitors, we are left simply with the vision of the game. The final mix is still unclear as the adventuring and exploration elements were not strongly evident in the preview code we saw. *The Fellowship of the Ring* runs solidly but feels a little empty. It's still too early to tell though it's shaping up as a real contender in the Christmas games rush. We nobly promise to bring more on the War of the Ring in due course.



MINES OF MARIO It gets a bit jumpy-jumpy in here.

PLAYTEST

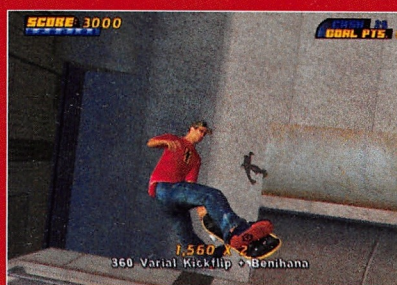
The preview code we played was very promising. There are no camera issues and attacking enemies in all directions proves possible and even enjoyable. Some impressive scenery is evident in sloping hills and dales, as well as expansive underground cathedrals to progress through. We played Aragorn as he ascends to the peak of Weathertop, we played Gandalf as he scurries through the dark corners of Moria and we played Frodo in some caverns doing platform style things. Enemies attack in handfuls, which is perhaps appropriate for these settings but we're yet to see the clammering hordes that will cause real excitement. The 3D combat for Aragorn is the most satisfying experience of our quick test run, while Gandalf's magic seemed to function much like Aragorn's bow and arrow, even though his range of spells is considerable. The game seems to be on course although the adventuring aspects will need to be more prominent if the action fails to emerge as a strength.

"I CAN SEE THE A&E WARD FROM UP HERE"

ETA
NOVEMBER
2002



AND THEY WALKED AWAY Messing things up in mid-air is just as wine-inducing as ever.



DANGEROUSLY SMALL SHADOW That's a big drop. Don't mess it up!

TONY HAWK'S PRO SKATER 4

AND WE WERE WORRIED THAT IT MIGHT BE NOTHING MORE THAN A LAZY ANNUAL UPDATE. SHAME ON US.

TYPE | SPORTS

DISTRIBUTOR | ACTIVISION

GAME GLANCE |

- / No more time limits
- / Even bigger levels
- / Based on some real locations
- / New difficulty levels for experts and beginners
- / Improved skate park editor

WE'RE PRETTY CONFIDENT OF OUR

gaming ability here at PSW. Driving ace Williams defies anyone to beat his lap times in pretty much any car-based title on PS2. It would take a fleet-footed goal machine to defeat Jackson at PES. Nutter's astounding *Virtua Fighter* skills, honed over years of play, must rank among the best in the land. And when it comes to rhythm action, tennis, extreme sports, or action adventures, Dewhurst is your confident victor. With this kind of pedigree you'd think we'd have every angle covered.

However, there's one game in which we're forced to concede second best. Not often mind. We can still rack up huge scoring combos with the best of 'em, but there are some players out there whose *Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 3* abilities defy belief. Guys who can traverse

every rail and ramp of every level without ever getting a face full of shattered teeth. Players who never fail to hit the magical million score every time they pick up the pad. We're not bitter though. Having to spread our talents so thinly over so many games does take its toll, you know.

SKATE SLACKERS IN HARD WORK SHOCKER

Tony Hawk experts are appearing all over the world thanks to the game's huge following. Venture online for the first time and prepare to be humiliated and humbled beneath the trucks of players who eat, sleep and drink PS2 skateboarding. These guys would be content with nothing more than a selection of new locations, continuing to display the class level design that really cements *Tony Hawk's* reputation as the pinnacle of PS2 extremeness.

So it would be easy for Activision to give gamers just that without really extending themselves too far and watch the cash flood in regardless. Thankfully the techies at Neversoft obviously enjoy playing *Tony Hawk's* as much as we do, and haven't just spent the last year swapping ramp stories

while rubbing Savlon onto their grazes. They've actually been doing some work.

The fourth installment of *Tony Hawk's* ticket to a world of pain, pleasure and outrageous trickery comes replete with a carnival of new treats for long-term Hawk fans and clumsy newcomers alike. While the underlying fundamentals remain thankfully intact, the rest of the game has benefited from some extensive renovation. Rest assured this will be no FIFA-esque visual makeover in preparation for another Christmas release. This



PREPARE FOR THE COMEDOWN Now you can bail out on bad jumps.

PSW PROPHECY

BEST BECAUSE

- ▲ It's improved one of the best games on PS2
- ▲ What more do you possibly want from this?

WORST BECAUSE

- ▼ It's another sequel - you know what to expect
- ▼ Haven't you already got three *Tony Hawk* games?



BONE GRIND TO SPLEEN GRAB The challenges have had a massive injection of imagination and humour. Talk to terrified painter? Y/N



CHICK TRICK Create your very own imaginary lady friend.



RAILWAYS Grinding opportunities are absolutely everywhere.



CAR-REERING OUT OF CONTROL Always check they're in neutral before you manual.



COMBO-TASTIC Master the revert and manual and you can almost fill the screen with stupid names.



BALANCING ACT Some of the manual tricks are astounding.

A-list entertainer hasn't just popped down for a nip and a tuck in all the right places. It's spent a few evenings at night school and come away with some tasty new tricks.

The new levels in *Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 4* are absolutely huge and teeming with activity. It's no longer just a case of a couple of dodgy looking characters milling about on street corners and the odd car rolling through town like lonely tumbleweed. The locations are now thriving with traffic clogging up the streets and random people going about their business and getting in your way as you grind through town. They're not just there for aesthetic beauty either.

BUMPER SURFING IN DOWNTOWN FRISCO

One of the new additions to Mr Hawk's burgeoning repertoire of moves is the ability to hitch a lift behind vehicles. Just press up when you're near the rear end of any car and your skater will grab hold of the bumper in a spontaneous bout of Michael J Fox inspired 'skitching'. Then it's just a matter of keeping your balance, in a similar fashion to grinding, and letting go when you get to your



destination. With the maps now so much larger it's a welcome means of quickly traversing each area, especially when there are Dodge Vipers and chunky 4x4s prowling the streets.

However, the game's most significant change revolves around the expanding populace inhabiting Tony's world. The seemingly insignificant dudes hanging out on street corners, workmen getting on with their daily grind and Bjorn Borg wannabes knocking their little fuzzy balls around the tennis court are the reason why Neversoft has taken the radical step to ditch the restrictive time limits.

Now you can wander the game's sprawling levels at your leisure. Take in the scenery, work out

a few score-maximising routes, practice your combos and perfect your manual work. Say goodbye to the skate shop and those task-activating menu screens, say hello to total freedom. In a similar fashion to *GT4* you've now got the choice of attempting the game proper or just doing your own thing at your own pace. It's one of those relatively simple changes that transforms the entire feel of the game and makes you wonder why didn't anyone (including us) think of this before. As for those people minding their own business throughout each level, they're your means of actually getting down to the real business of Tony Hawk's infamous challenges. >



Whenever you fancy a task, just mosey on up to the nearest bystander (handily signified by a throbbing blue arrow stabbing at their bald patch) and they'll offer you a challenge. All of the familiar staples are in there; collect the S.K.A.T.E. letters, rack up a mammoth score and those deviously hidden tapes. But that's about as straightforward as you're gonna get. The imagination, and sheer craziness of some of the tasks sends every other extreme sports title to the back of the class for their lack of vision and mediocrity in the face of *Tony Hawk's* exuberance. There's an almost embarrassing surfeit of humour and creativity smeared all over this inspired game.

Seemingly simple tasks can escalate out of control in an instant. At one point we approached a local handyman who needed help cleaning bird crap off the railings running along the sea front pier. Nothing that a bit of judicious grinding won't fix, we thought. Unfortunately the ageing pier wasn't able to cope with our rail riding and it collapsed into the sea. Not only that but the handyman was left hanging from the wreckage with a shark snapping at his dangling legs, just like the moment in *Jaws* where it mounts the boat and proceeds to chomp Robert Shaw in two. So much for an uncomplicated romp by the sea front.

WHEN IS A SKATEBOARD NOT A SKATEBOARD?

Other tasks are far more straightforward but no less entertaining. A number of them have Tony using his board in pretty unorthodox fashion. At one point you can approach a tennis player for a bit of a knockabout using his skateboard as a racket. Another challenge has you lying on the board using it as a street luge. In this section you've got to make your way across the level, zipping through checkpoints in under thirty seconds. The speed and twitchy manoeuvrability make it insanely testing but also incredibly addictive. It's easily one of our favourites so far.



BOARD HORIZONS Everything you see can be skated.

SEE WHAT YOU CAN DO. 02.

SOD MOBILE PHONES. ACTIVISION'S '02' EXTREME SPORTS RANGE IS FAR MORE EXCITING.

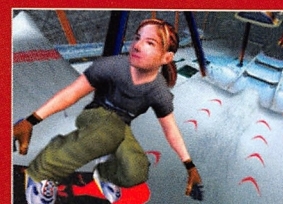
// TONY HAWK'S PRO SKATER 3



More fun than the real thing and far less painful. The best extreme sports game on any system (until *Tony Hawk 4* hits the shops). Now out on Platinum.

★★★★★ 9/10

// SHAUN PALMER'S PRO SNOWBOARDER



Don't think this is just an inferior *SSX Tricky*. *SPPS* shuns racing in favour of *Tony Hawk*-style challenges. There's room for both games in your collection.

★★★★★ 8/10

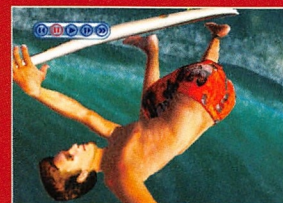
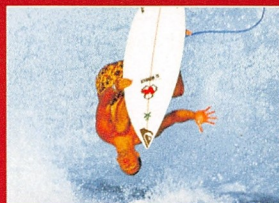
// MAT HOFFMAN'S PRO BMX 2



It's not just *Tony Hawk* on two big wheels. The handling's very different and the trick focus here has a greater emphasis on ground stunts.

★★★★★ 8/10

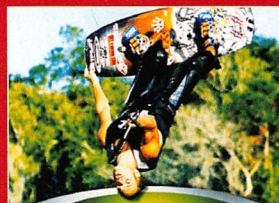
// KELLY SLATER'S PRO SURFER



A chilled out alternative to Mr Hawk and Hoffman that's no less entertaining, even though you're restricted to a selection of wildly varied waves.

★★★★★ 6/10

// SHAUN MURRAY'S PRO WAKEBOARDER

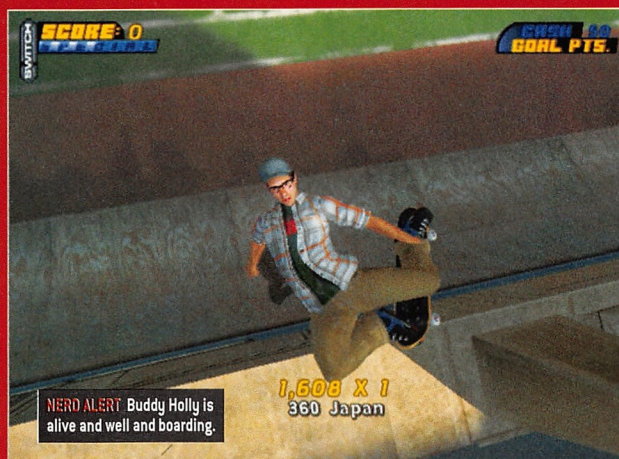


From what we've seen of this it's already looking just as entertaining as the rest. Despite being tied to a speedboat you've still got plenty of freedom.

REVIEWED: SOON



THIGH, WIDE AND HANDSOME Hours can be passed just trying to see what colour panties she's got on.



Even Tony's new skills get shoehorned into the challenges, with his skitching ability put to the test when you're asked to catch a car thief. All you've got to do is hold on as the cars scream through the City trying to throw you off. The imagination shines through in nearly every task. Straight-forward challenges like having to leap across a series of successive structures are spiced up by having the jumps form part of a carnival slowly moving through the streets. Now you've got to soar from float to float while they're on the move.

Handily you've got a new addition to the control set up that enables you to take off from a jump and land on the opposite side of it with a simple press of L2. It makes traversing obstacles so much easier, and can be used to bail out of a stunt that's gone wrong and still land on your wheels rather than your face. The freedom it provides is immense, with ramps no longer just a means of leaping into the air and back down again.

Even in those areas in which *Tony Hawk* doesn't innovate, you're still struck by the levels of polish and perfection the makers have put in to make this game bigger and better in every way. Visually it's a



INSULTING It might not be spectacular, but that's a bit harsh.



stunner of a game due in no small part to the impressive level design. It's what's enabled the *Tony Hawk* games to constantly remain ahead of the competition, and the levels on offer here are even more intricately designed than ever, making for some supreme trick linking and huge sprawling combos. Some areas are even based on real world locations.

THE WORLD ON PS2 (CONCISE EDITION)

Having visited San Francisco recently we were struck by how faithful *Tony Hawk 4*'s recreation of this skate friendly city is. We were able to navigate our way around the seafront area and in particular the famous pier 39 with immediate ease. Look left as you're trundling along the pier and San Francisco's famous guests, the seals, are yelping away and providing yet another bizarre challenge opportunity. With Alcatraz and the Bay Bridge in the background it's one of the most striking locations yet to feature in a *Tony Hawk* game, and the opportunity for stunting trickery is impressive considering this is a real place. Next time we're lucky enough to pop over to the real San Fran we're definitely bringing our boards with us.

With the series having such a huge following it could have been easy for the developers to give

Hawk fans everything they desire while forgetting about those who are new to the game. If you haven't honed your skills over the previous three games, *Tony Hawk 4* could have been a daunting experience for skate virgins. Thankfully Neversoft is catering for all gamers with two different levels of challenge. Make your way through the game as an amateur and you get to unlock an entirely new set of much more difficult challenges. This clever inclusion means that newcomers will still be able to unlock new levels and progress through the game without getting hopelessly stuck and overwhelmed, while experts get to revisit areas for a much sterner test.

/ MIKEY FOLEY

FIRST OPINIONS

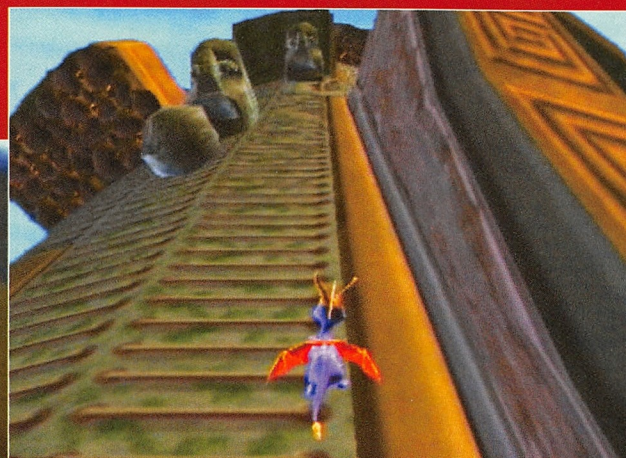
PSW

Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 4 has surprised us by being far more inventive than we'd anticipated. This is no lazy annual update. The new level of freedom totally transforms the game into a proper world, and the selection of smaller tweaks has raised an already brilliant game to even greater levels of extreme pleasure. Is it worth getting if you own TH3? Find out in the review coming your way next issue...

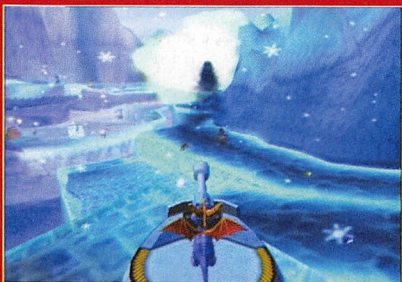
"LITTLE DO-ER"



ETA
DECEMBER
2002



LET'S GET STONED Do those rocks have faces? Spooky!



ICE ICE BABY Suddenly everything got a bit slippery-slidey.



SURPRISE Spyro is clearly shocked by the parody of Dune.



SPYRO: ENTER THE DRAGONFLY

REIGN OF FIRE GOT IT WRONG. DRAGONS ARE IN ACTUAL FACT
CUTE AND CUDDLY CREATURES WHO MEAN US NO HARM.

TYPE	PLATFORMER
DISTRIBUTOR	VIVENDI
GAME GLANCE	
/ It's Spyro but all-new!	
/ 25 levels	
/ 16 mini-games	

PSW PROPHECY

BEST BECAUSE

- ▲ Spyro himself is undeniably charming
- ▲ It's a safe choice for Mum and Dad this Christmas

WORST BECAUSE

- ▼ How can he compete with Ratchet & Clank?
- ▼ Or indeed even Jak & Daxter as well?

THE LITTLE DOER OF 3D PLATFORMERS

is back. While lacking the kind of fame that only a handful of game characters enjoy, *Spyro the Dragon* has earned a place in the hearts of Playstation owners through tireless years in the background. After cornering a market on the PSone, Spyro makes his debut on the PS2 showing the style and wit that made him famous a [gaming] generation ago. Enter the Dragonfly has Spyro, with his trusty sidekick Sparx the Dragonfly, engaged in more 3D flying, spitting, headbutting dragon-style action.

The story is all about Dragonflies. It seems someone has captured Sparx's close friends and family, much to the distress of Spyro and hangers-on. Sparx reveals that the source of the mystical power of the dragons in dragon world comes from the dragonflies – [not to mention the fact the dragonflies train all the baby Spyros]. Without them, Spyro can't make a sequel! So Spyro and

Sparx (with the help of friends and well-wishers) set out on their greatest adventure yet: to save dragonkind and face none other than Ripto, a character just begging for a Wario-esque solo title..

Spyro has amassed a fair range of skills from his previous game outings, with which to kick arse. He can swim underwater, supercharge attacks and do that head bashing thing we all love. This far into the series, it makes no sense that he should breathe only fire – he can now projectile breathe a whole array of nasty (see panel).

Spyro must venture through more than 25 levels from the familiar ice scene of slippery frozen lakes and soft powder to darkest jungles with erupting volcanos; from Himalayan mountain temples to hushed nocturnal nature scapes. Also promised are rainbows, tropical monsoons and tornados. The visuals on offer in *Enter the Dragonfly* are what will impress fans and the uninitiated alike.

ALL IN THE MINUTIAE

Spyro himself now boasts upwards of 4000 polygons and the environments are vast with a longer draw distance and more animated scenery, creating a satisfying and realistic ambience. The contrast between the different worlds is made stark by the fine details. The grass and crops of a pastoral scene move and sway to Spyro's breath and the subtle lighting adds to the dusky setting. The underwater swimming sections are beautifully aquatic with convincing water movements.

The ice levels – always in danger of feeling a little ho-hum – demonstrate loving attention to the finer points in snowfall particle effects, cloud cover in the sky and the sense of depth in the layers of ice. If Spyro looks down, it really seems like a frozen body of water beneath his haunches. Of course, there are also the impressive reflections of the purple Dragon all over the place. It is the subtle responses of the environments to Spyro's

BAD BREATH

"IT'S SPYRO- BUT HE SPITS ICE TOO!"

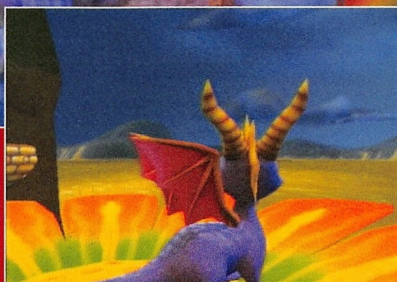
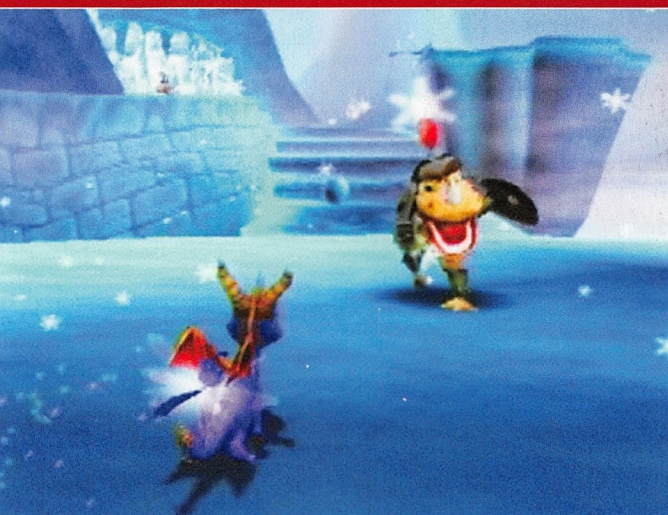
So recounted one well-embittered games journalist of the demo code on display at ECTS. For shame! How dare she neglect to mention that the fluffy dragon has learnt to spit even more than mere flames and icicles? Quite apart from unconfirmed reports of Spyro's COMING OF AGE (if you catch my drift), his array of spitting has grown from one to four. In addition to the lovable flames, Spyro will have Ice Breath, Bubble Breath and Electricity Breath. The Ice freezes things, naturally, the Bubbles are used captured wayward dragonflies, and the Electricity short circuits hard-wired predators. And watch out for puzzle elements that require the use of said spits.



I SPIT ON YOUR... His ice breath freezes stuff. Clever.



GETTING SOME AIR Here Spyro smartly avoids the precision jumps by flying over the platforms.



CUTE AS A BUTTON Or even a flower, in this case.



TECHNICOLOUR The artists vowed to use every colour in the palette.



presence that make the game so impressive in its uniquely cartoon realism.

Spyro's various breath abilities can help in attacking different enemies, as some will be immune to fire (or any of the others) but may be vulnerable to an alternative approach. Beyond that, the ice breath can freeze enemies into platforms to allow Spyro to reach areas that are tantalisingly out of reach. Meanwhile the primary function of the bubble breath is to capture the one hundred dragonflies lost in the game levels and return them to safety.

The icing on the cake is the return of a delightful array of characters with sweet touches. Similar enemies appear in different outfits in the various levels – your standard Ripto minion might be rugged up in the ice levels, and sporting a bald head and sheet in the mountain temples. Expect lip-synced voice acting for the entire cast and look forward to 16 mini-game additions, including a Parappa-style rhythm game among others.

This is the little Dragon's first appearance on the PS2 and it certainly doesn't look to break much ground. Spyro's garden is a well-ordered place – those who play here know what's expected and may not want anything else. The graphical improvements and expansion of repertoire of manoeuvres and skills, not to mention the inclusion of more collectibles (yay!) means that *Spyro: Enter the Dragonfly* should be another fine title in what is quickly becoming one of the stronger series for Sony. Spyro is back and while largely unchanged, he's as strong as ever.

/ JOHN DEWHURST



TANKS FOR THE RIDE We've got plenty more hilarious puns...



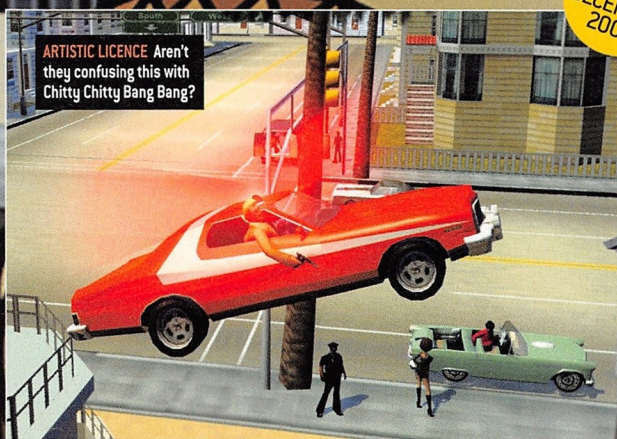
GREEN GOBLIN Maybe try jumping on their heads?

FIRST OPINIONS

PSW

Vivendi Universal Games enlisted a new developer in Equinox for this Spyro jaunt. You'd barely notice because it's vintage Spyro with the visuals turned up to 2003. Strong, stylish and competent gaming, *Enter the Dragonfly* is sure to appear on the Christmas wish lists of ten-year-olds across the land.

"FREEZE! THIS IS A CARDY-AC ARREST!"



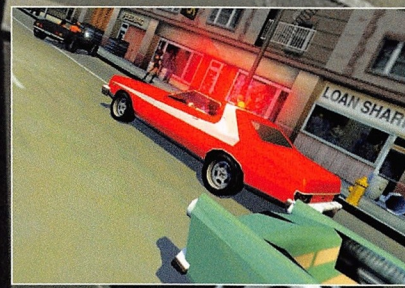
ETA
DECEMBER
2002



WOO-WOO-WOO! Expect to hear that quite a lot in the game.



MY UNCLE HAD A CAR LIKE THIS Except it was a Cortina instead.



HOW TO MAKE GAMES MORE EXCITING Tilt the camera over a bit.

STARKY & HUTCH

MR HUTCH, MEET MR STARKY, MR STARKY, MR HUTCH.
OH, YOU TWO KNOW EACH OTHER?

TYPE DRIVING / SHOOTING

DISTRIBUTOR VIVENDI

GAME GLANCE

/ 10 square miles of city
/ Five drivable vehicles
/ Ridiculous kitsch value

THIS GAME HAS ACTUALLY BEEN IN

development since before some PSW staff were born, with developer Minds Eye originally promising a release 'sometime in 2001'. Okay, so that's a slight exaggeration. Sue us. Nonetheless, it's been a bloody long time between when we first heard about it and the arrival of this preview code, so please forgive the cynicism.

We just hope to God the finished product is better than the *Knight Rider* game we saw the other day, which is so bad we couldn't bring ourselves to waste any more valuable pages of PSW writing about it. And then there's the old *Dukes of Hazzard* games on PSone, which were seven kinds of shite.

But take a look at these screens, though. Hope is high. A glance at the map of Starky's & Hutch's home town of Bay City also reveals promise, as it's notably huge, with over 10 square miles of mean streets to deal with.

Further perusal reveals some amusing possibilities for stunts, with areas such as the broken bridge jump, rail line jump and the, er... drive-thru roller disco. Whether these designated spots are the only places to get some air and hoot like a gibbon remains to be seen, but we hope there are plenty of incidental jumps as you scoot around the city.

Any racer with an urban setting is doomed to comparison with the *GTA* games, but what does mark this out is the ability to play co-operatively, with one of you driving and the other shooting – and it even uses a light gun. This immediately raises the possibility of digging out a steering wheel and doing it all yourself, driving with one hand and shooting with the other while the wind blows your enormous silky hairdo and the wah-wah guitars chuckle in the background. This would of course be incredibly cool, unless your sister walked in with her gorgeous friends at that point, in which case it would be the lamest

thing since the tasselled leather jacket.

It might be a big city, and it certainly contains enough of the show's key locations to satisfy the fans – Huggy's Bar, Hutch's apartment, the law courts and so on – but you won't be cruising around wondering where you're supposed to be. It's mission based, and there's a strict timer urging you on to your destination, *Driver* style. The good news is that extra time, like a fat, doughnut eating cop, can be bought. Big, stylish drifts and spectacular hit-and-runs on cardboard boxes boost your timer, so it's important to look out for those eternally dirty alleyways and their piles of rubbish. Take it too easy on either the throttle or the trigger and the clock actually counts down even faster, taunting you with unstoppable hands, laughing at your face and hair and calling you a wazzcock. Metaphorically speaking, of course.

DUO THAT NAMED A GENERATION'S RABBITS

In what will probably be described as 'over four vehicles and more than five weapons' on the back of the box, *Starky & Hutch* offers five cars and six

PSW PROPHECY

BEST BECAUSE

- ▲ Co-operative driving and shooting... nice!
- ▲ Great car
- ▲ Be Starky or Hutch!

WORST BECAUSE

- ▼ Could compare unfavourably to *GTA3*
- ▼ Who wants to be the good guys?



SMOKIN' Laying down rubber earns you bonus time for missions.



guns. That sounds rather a disappointing offering at first, but look at it this way: it is. Still, with a lightgun the variations in weaponry feel less important, because what you're holding still looks the same, and we only want to drive *that* red and white Ford Gran Torino anyway. Still, a few more stodgy/squealy/overpowered US cars and vans wouldn't have gone amiss. Developer types, how about it? Oh. Well, that was rather rude.

WALLS, FRIENDS AND WHITE THINGS

Of course, there's no need to fret if you're currently *sans* lightgun, or in fact wouldn't be seen dead with one, as it all works just as well with a normal pad. And if a list of your friends written on a white wall looks the same as a white wall with no writing on it, well, maybe you should smile more. This game should help: there's full computer-controlled Starsky action for single players. He'll also offer



UNDERCOVER ELEPHANT Stealth elements are not to the fore.

advice and generally shout insults at those around him, perhaps about their clothes. *S&H* fact: did you know that Starsky only ever wore that astonishingly bad cardigan for three shows? Yet it's famous. Weird. Their car was originally to be a yellow Camaro, too, but was switched at a late stage when Ford struck a deal to supply the programme's wheels. Imagine! Lacking the 70s glamour the Torino lent it (there's no game of *Cagney & Lacey* you'll note) *Starsky & Hutch* would have failed, this game would never have been made and these pages would stare back at you silent and cold. Hooray for big red cars!

You can say hooray for Huggy Bear, too, the stereotyped black character who acted as the lead duo's ear on the street, as the actor – Antonio Fargas – lends his superfly voice to the soundtrack. Sadly both David Soul and Paul Michael Glaser were too busy in their roles as washed up actors to provide anything themselves. Nevertheless, we await it all with bated breath. Whatever that means. Why not write in and tell us? / STEVEN WILLIAMS

FIRST OPINIONS

PSW

If it turns out as well as it's looking in this early incarnation, we could be in for a treat. However, it is up against the mighty *GTA Vice City*, and will have to do a hell of a lot if it's to come off better in the inevitable comparisons.

YEAH, BUT IT'S NOT AS COOL AS...

ALL THOSE OTHER 80s TV CAR 'N' STAR ICONS. IN A BIG FIGHT, WHO WOULD WIN?

STARSKY & HUTCH

EQUIPPED WITH: 1976 Gran Torino.
SPECIAL ATTRIBUTES: \$150 paint job (really, that's how much it cost), squealing tyres, bum-slide proof roof.
VERDICT: Heavy and stupid-looking.



■■■■■■■■■■ 5

THE A-TEAM

EQUIPPED WITH: Custom LDV van.
SPECIAL ATTRIBUTES: State of the art surveillance equipment, hidden weapons box, nice comfy leather chairs for everyone. Milk.
VERDICT: Tasty but a bit redneck.



■■■■■■■■■■ 7

KNIGHT RIDER

EQUIPPED WITH: 1983 Pontiac Trans Am.
SPECIAL ATTRIBUTES: Self-repairing encyclopaedically knowledgeable artificial intelligence, turbo boost for jumps, 0-60 in two seconds, oil slicks, grappling hook, ejector seats, smokescreens, oxygen supply, vital signs scanner, microwave jammer, bonnet mounted x-ray scanner, automatic pilot. Gay.
VERDICT: Too clever for its own good.



■■■■■■■■■■ 8

STREET HAWK

EQUIPPED WITH: Old Honda motocrosser with extra pointy bits.
SPECIAL ATTRIBUTES: 300mph computer guided performance, laser cannons, machine guns, rocket launcher, infrared camera, compressed air for jumps, broke the laws of physics.
VERDICT: Unbelievable shite.



■■■■■■■■■■ 2

DUKES OF HAZZARD

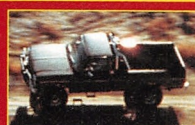
EQUIPPED WITH: 1969 Dodge Charger.
SPECIAL ATTRIBUTES: Three-point roll cage, welded up doors (lucky they rolled the windows down first), confederate flag on the roof, 'Dixie' 12-note horn (for use when the law ends up crashed in a pond), bum-slide proof bonnet.
VERDICT: So shapely, so orange, so metal.



■■■■■■■■■■ 9

THE FALL GUY

EQUIPPED WITH: GMC pickup truck.
SPECIAL ATTRIBUTES: Enormous wheels, huge suspension, roll bar, lots of lights, 3.5 litre V8 engine, CB radio antenna, winch, push bar, the unknown stuntman at the wheel.
VERDICT: Bounced to pieces on jumps.



■■■■■■■■■■ 7

PREVIEW UPDATE

WE'VE PREVIEWED THEM ALREADY, BUT THEY'RE STILL NOT FINISHED. HERE'S A QUICK UPDATE...



NIGHT RIDER Break the headlights and you're in trouble.



EASTERN BLOCK The Skoda's big but surprisingly handy.



SNAP, CRACKLE AND POP Turbos on the overrun = flames.



B'OH! The Accent rally car shames the road-going version.

"THIS AIN'T
NO SEGA
RALLY
ARCADE
EXPERIENCE"



WRC II EXTREME

HOW DOES YOUR CO-DRIVER READ THE MAP WITHOUT GETTING CAR SICK?

HARD RIGHT. EVEN HARDER LEFT. UPHILL HARD RIGHT. Wickedly hard left followed by viciously hard right. This is the kind of daunting prospect that has faced the developer of *WRC2* over the last year. Such a beautiful-looking, comprehensively-detailed game as *WRC* deserved better than the appalling handling it was saddled with. So, for the last 12 months Evolution Studios has toiled away totally stripping out the most fundamental part of any driving game, and rebuilding *WRC2* with completely redesigned handling. The big question is – have the considerable

efforts been worth it? From our first play of *WRC II*, the answer would have to be yes.

The version we played didn't even have working analogue controls properly implemented, but even so it was a marked improvement over last year's game. At last this jaw-dropping off-roader has the handling it so richly deserves. But this ain't no slidey *Sega Rally*-esque arcade experience. This is hardcore rallying.

If you want to slide your car around every bend you still can, but it takes expert control. It's best to save your sideways action for the numerous incredibly tight hairpins. *WRC II* forces you to drive like a proper championship contender and you need quick reactions to make it through the course. If you go into a turn too fast and think you can hit the brakes to slide your way out of trouble, you may as

well rip up your no claims bonus right now. Blasting through every bend will end in disaster. Braking early and tempering your urge to go pelting through every bend is the route to success, and it makes for a rivetting experience. With each stage so long and car damage so critical, you're left constantly treading a fine line between the insane speeds *WRC II* moves at and nerve-fraying caution.

This is the most satisfying rally experience we've had in ages. How will it compare with *Colin McRae Rally 3*? Check back next month for full reviews of both contenders.

- TYPE: Racing
- DISTRIBUTOR: Sony
- LAST PREVIEW: PSW #5
- ETA: November



KAHN QUITE REACH IT Oliver gets beaten at the near post. Shame.

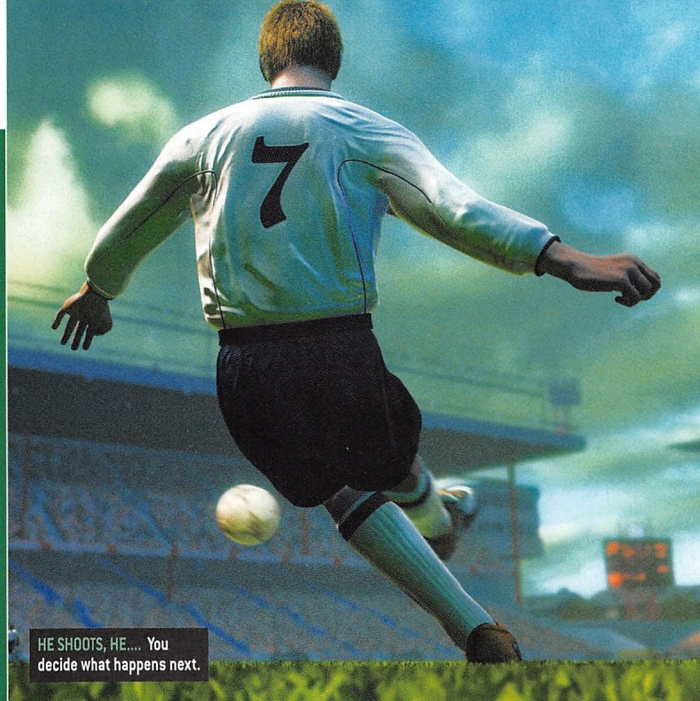
PRO EVOLUTION SOCCER 2

NOT LONG TO WAIT NOW. THE PS2 FOOTY SEASON KICKS OFF THIS NOVEMBER. COUNT THE DAYS...

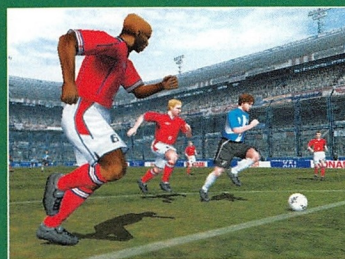
WE GET LOTS OF EMAILS REGARDING PES. Most of them from players wondering we keep banging on about so much month after month, or lovers of the beautiful game just wanting to share their passion for one of the PS2's very own

masterpieces. Not all of the calls are 100 percent positive though. It seems like an awful lot of you out there are disgruntled by the fact that you can't have two players participating in the Master League. Well, despair no longer. *Pro Evolution Soccer 2* rectifies the only major failing of the original. Mmm... we like.

- TYPE: Sports
- DISTRIBUTOR: Infogrames
- LAST PREVIEW: PSW #5
- ETA: November



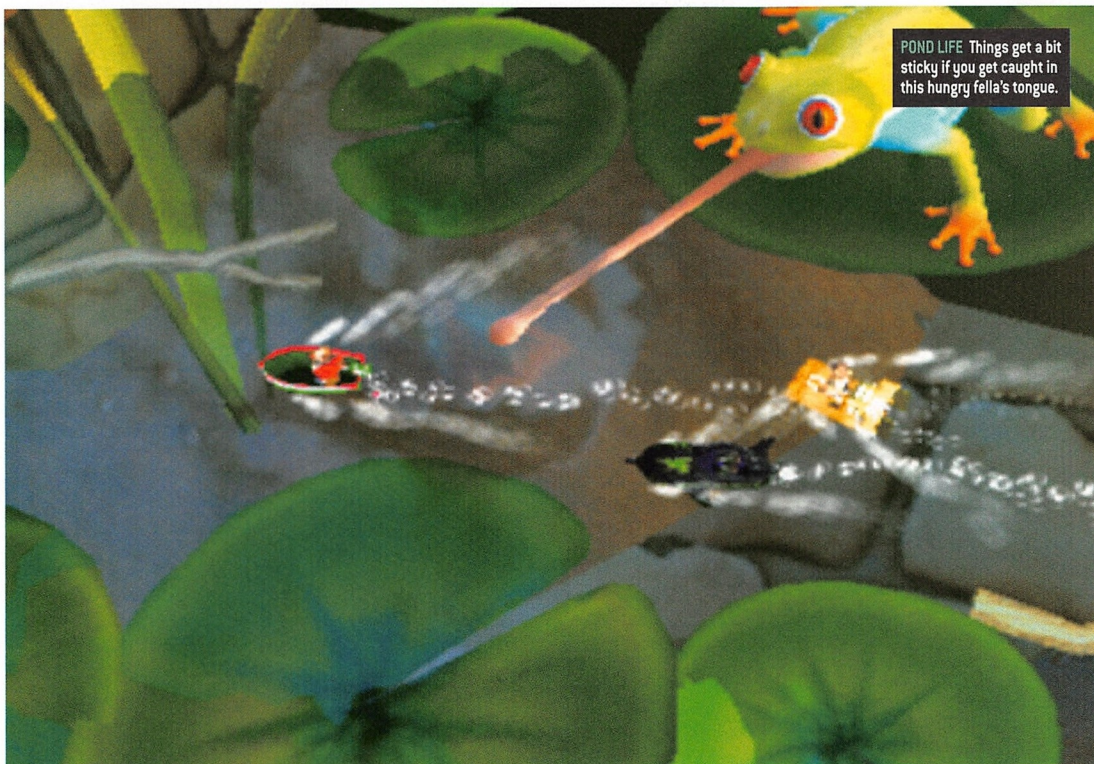
HE SHOOTS, HE.... You decide what happens next.



HAMMY Sincs on England's right flank. Take that, Becks!



SMOOTH SKIN The player models are even better.



POND LIFE Things get a bit sticky if you get caught in this hungry fella's tongue.

MICRO MACHINES

LITTLE CARS. BIG FUN.

EVERYONE HERE LOOKED UP AND WENT

"Ooh!" when *Micro Machines* turned up on PS2, all of us wanting to relive happy memories of one of modern gaming's all time classics. Well looky here, it's on PS2 and we'll be darned if it isn't looking brilliant too, all hi-res, 3D and covered in PS2 shine.

And best of all the feel of the game still seems right. Cars struggle to get up hills (well, bumpy carpets), bounce off each other and generally behave as fun little race cars should, building up speed and flying off ledges to their destruction every few seconds, only to reappear again and continue anew. Why does that make it good? It just does. If you haven't played it you won't understand, and are missing out.

But we'll ramble on about that more in the review. In the mean time, take a moment to sit quietly on your own and think about just how good this game could be. Us? We're thinking an eight or even a nine. Find out next month.

- TYPE: Racing
- DISTRIBUTOR: Infogrames
- LAST PREVIEW: PSW#4
- ETA: December



HEAD FOR THE GOOP! Very helpful arrow that.



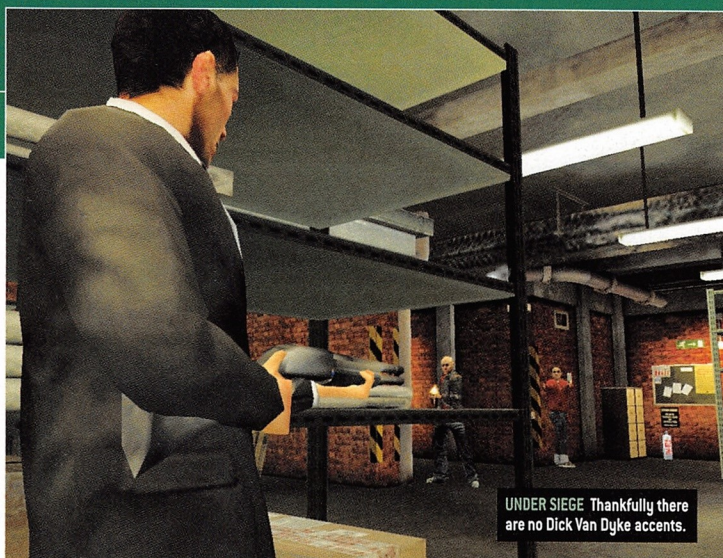
LAP DANCE Falling off the track here is bad news.



COLOURFUL CHARACTERS Wacky requirement filled.



THE OTHER SIDE Don't play chicken with these guys.



THE GETAWAY

COR BLIMEY, IS THAT A SHOOTER IN YER SKY ROCKET OR ARE YA JUST PLEASED TO SEE YER OLD CHINA?

LITTLE DID GUY RITCHIE KNOW JUST WHAT

he was unleashing when he made *Lock, Stock and Two Smoking Barrels*. Without him there'd be no cockney revival or mockney bastardisation, no Vinnie Jones tackling Hollywood, and no Jamie Oliver and his pukka grub. Don't hate Mr Ritchie though. Without his influence we'd all be driving yellow taxis past subway stations, into Cadillacs and through hordes of cops this year, next year and the year after if he hadn't made London so damn cool. Now we get to nick black cabs, smash up TVR Tuscans and crappy old Cavaliers, leg it from the fuzz past the local underground station, F'in this and F'in that along the way. It's colourful to say the least.

This is easily the best argument for an R certificate we've ever played with hardcore, rampant violence and loads of swearing. Pretty good swearing at that. There's something strangely captivating about a videogame that talks with the vernacular of an East End sewerage worker.

At London's recent ECTS show and the accompanying PlayStation Experience, *The Getaway* was far and away the most popular game on view. The playable pods were surrounded by a throng of desperate onlookers for the entire event. We're not surprised though. We're looking forward to this just as much as you lot. Similar to our favourite PS2 single-player game (*GTA3*) but set in good ole London Town, you'd 'ave to be a right muppet not to want this one bad.

- TYPE: Action Adventure
- DISTRIBUTOR: Sony
- LAST PREVIEW: PSW #5
- ETA: December

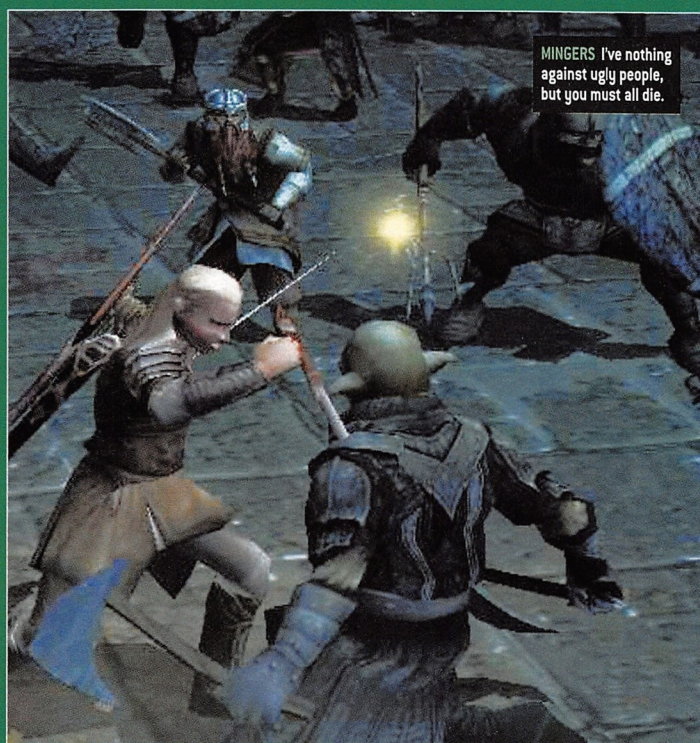
LORD OF THE RINGS: THE TWO TOWERS

BASED ON THE MOVIE AND WITH MORE ACTION - IT'S A WINNER!

IT'S ABSOLUTE BEDLAM. PS2 HAS never known so much violent mayhem. *State of Emergency's* rampant pandemonium has nothing on this game. *LOTR* is better looking, more chaotic and (most importantly) much more involving than the vacuous *State of Emergency*. You can almost feel the panic as armies of bloodlusting orcs and goblins lay siege to your castle. Comrades battle against the tidal wave of axes, arrows and cleaving blades wherever you look.

In the midst of all this chaos is your hero Aragorn. Luckily, he's a bit nifty with his chopper, being able to pull off some spectacular feats of multiple limb severing that can take out crowds of ghouls with just one blow. When you've made your way up onto the battlements you can even whip out your bow and start planting arrows between their bug eyes. It's frantic stuff but constantly thrilling and a joy to watch as the PS2 is pushed to new levels to cope with such bewilderingly abundant action.

- TYPE: Action
- DISTRIBUTOR: Electronic Arts
- LAST PREVIEW: PSW #4
- ETA: November



DEVIL MAY CRY 2

IT'S GONNA BE TWICE AS GOOD — SO SAYS THE PRODUCER...

WHY? BECAUSE YOU GET TO PLAY AS TWO different characters. Because the game is now twice as big as the first. Because the resolution has doubled to make *DMC2* even more of a visual banquet of loveliness than the gorgeous first game. And because your new character obviously thinks two swords are better than one to have her wicked way with.

We've managed to eke some more info on Dante's new sidekick out of Capcom. Lucia is a twin blade packing, close

combat expert who persuades Dante to accompany her back to a town she's protecting. Apparently there's another devil hunter already there. And just as it was getting interesting, the information river dried up, as if suddenly dammed by the Capcom secrecy department.

At least we can confirm one thing. As these shots demonstrate, *DMC2* looks even better than the sumptuously detailed original. You might even say twice as good.

■ TYPE: Action adventure

■ DISTRIBUTOR: THQ

■ LAST PREVIEW: PSW #3

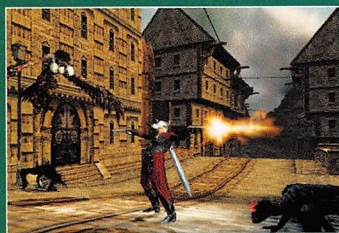
■ ETA: February



NU METAL. Choose from a range of weapons to wreak maximum havoc.



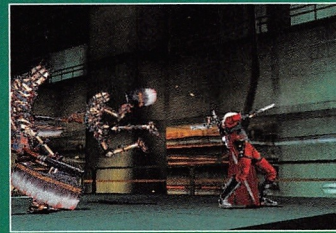
SATAN WEPT God is much more of a real man.



TWICE AS NICE Two swords equals more killing.



SWORD IN THE STONE Boys and their enormous toys.



UP THE DANTE There's more of everything...



STAY IN LANE But motorways are normally so dull.



SKID MARKS Even more visible in the snow.

COLIN MCRAE RALLY 3

THE DIRTMASTER ARRIVES ON PS2 AND, THIS TIME IT'S THRICE AS NICE.

AFTER THE INITIAL DISAPPOINTMENT OF OUR FIRST PLAY OF *Colin McRae Rally 3*, we're pleased to be able to report a noticeable upturn in fortunes. The handling has improved immensely to give us that fondly familiar *McRae* slidiness we all remember from our PSone rallying adventures. It gives you the confidence to chuck your car into every bend and struggle with the consequences on the way out.

But the game still requires a bit of tweaking. A little bit more speed would still help and some of the stages are rather bland at this point, but we're quietly optimistic after seeing the improvements Codemasters has made in just a few weeks. There's still plenty of time before release to polish off this game with those sexy final touches that could have *V-Rally 3* and *WRC II Extreme* looking anxiously in its rear view mirror. The PS2 rally showdown is about to reach a climax. We'll let you know which is the messiest very soon.

■ TYPE: Racing

■ DISTRIBUTOR: Infogrames

■ LAST PREVIEW: PSW #3

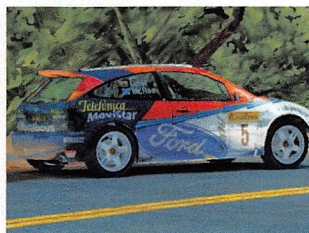
■ ETA: November



SPLIT SECOND TIMING Multiplayer could be a laugh.



OFF-ROAD Get familiar with those ditches.



IS IT OUT YET? Review coming soon... we promise.



YOU'RE FIRED Playing as the humans, you begin your battle in Norfolk.



TIME FOR WAR Dragons v humans. It's classic colonial oppression material.

'CHECK OUT THE ARSON ON THAT!'

REIGN OF FIRE: THE MOVIE IS OUT NOW. THERE'S GOING TO BE A VIDEOGAME TOO. IT'S DRAGONS VS MAN; AN EXCITING PROSPECT ACCORDING TO ITS EXECUTIVE PRODUCER, MARK WASHBROOK... INTERVIEW BY STEPHEN PIERCE

WHY WAS THIS FILM IDEAL FOR A VIDEOGAME TRANSLATION?

The film script itself painted a strong image of two species battling for survival on a scarred post-apocalyptic Earth, something that the entire team was inspired by. The cast, including the early dragon designs, provided strong direction for the vision of the film, which was something that we could carry over into the game. Spyglass and BAM! were very keen to let us make the best game we could, and not restrict this process. In fact they actively encouraged expanding on the film to this end.

ARE YOU FOLLOWING THE FILM'S STORY AT ALL?

The basic premise for the film is carried over into the game. The player in the human missions plays the part of a resistance fighter starting at the Norfolk stronghold defending the fort from the dragons, before joining up with Van Zan's Irregulars at Dover and eventually facing the final conflict, the father of all dragons in London. The player in the dragon missions effectively gets to play the game in reverse, wreaking havoc and mayhem as they attempt to burn them from the face of the earth.

WHY CAN YOU PLAY AS HUMANS AND DRAGONS?

When we first read the script the obvious thing to do was to create a game where the player was one of the lead actors from the film, battling the dragons to the death. However, the one thing we felt would be really cool would be to play as the dragons.

To be able to fly over the terrain, destroying everything in your path and feel the power that the dragon embodies was just perfect for a videogame. From a game design point of view this also allows the player to complete missions battling against the dragons and then be able to play the mission in the part of the dragon.

IS THE GAME PURELY AN ACTION-ORIENTED EXPERIENCE, OR ARE THERE ANY STORY/PUZZLE ELEMENTS?

The game is very much an all-action affair with missions linked around a fast-moving plot, based upon events in the film. The player has very specific objectives on every mission although they may be working with, or providing support for other units. We've tried to make the player feel that they are working within a team, and although they're not the sole protagonist, they are the catalyst for success in both human and dragon missions.

WHAT ARE THE ADVANTAGES OF PLAYING AS EACH SPECIES?

More than you would initially think. The human missions provide the player with four different types of vehicle with very different weapons and handling characteristics. As you play

through the human missions battling the dragons, you learn to defeat them and perfect your moves and use of weapons. When you then unlock the dragon missions you have the advantage of knowing the strategy of the human defences, but then have to learn to manoeuvre past their stern defences.

SURELY DRAGONS ARE NATURALLY TOUGHER? HOW DO YOU GET THE BALANCE RIGHT?

Yes, dragons are tough but so are the humans in their own way. The dragons have far more devastating attack power than the humans and are very manoeuvrable in flight, but take damage very quickly. The player's edge is maintained by using the dragons' speed to avoid being hit and using fireballs to attack units from a distance, before coming in for the devastating kill with napalm. The humans on the other hand have the terrain features, which can be used to hide from attacks, unlike the dragons whose only real protection is distance. Used in conjunction with heat seeking missiles and rockets, dragons can be quite effectively taken down. It pays not to stay in one place too long!

HOW DOES THE GAME DIFFER WHEN YOU'RE PLAYING ON THE



A LOAD OF HOT AIR The dragon. Excellent in the air. Useful for barbecues.



HISTORICALLY INACCURATE According to myth, the helicopter died out in 11BC.

"REIGN OF FIRE PUSHES PS2 TO ITS LIMITS"

MARK WASHBROOK /
EXEC. PRODUCER



NORFOLKING WAY I'M STAYING The dragons felt London's property to be pricey.



CAN WE HAVE OUR PLANET BACK? They're older than the dinosaurs apparently.



IT'S REIGNING FIRE They're made of flesh and blood. Well, plastic and CGI...



DRAGONS' SIDE?

The player has more freedom than in the human missions. Flying over the terrain, using the high-speed flight allows the player to quickly travel great distances and avoid incoming missiles and rockets. The gameplay comes from destroying the human units and avoiding attacks from both the ground based units and the aerial units.

HUMANS VS. DRAGONS – WILL THERE BE TWO OR EVEN FOUR-PLAYER OPTIONS?

It was our intention at the outset to push the engine to its limits in order to deliver the special effects and environment that we felt would be expected of the game. In order to do this the technology has been heavily optimised to make the game look and feel as good as it does. Had we added multi-player we would have had to compromise these aspects and the environments.

HOW DO YOU GO ABOUT DESIGNING AND CREATING DRAGONS? ARE THEY ALL BASED ON ONES FROM THE FILM?

Working with Spyglass helped a lot as it had done much of the design work for the dragons in the film. Visiting Disney's secret labs to see the dragons develop and get a feel for how they moved and behaved allowed us to form a core essence for the dragons that we then mapped out into the other dragon types we created.

HAVE YOU SEEN THE FILM? IS IT ANY GOOD?

We've seen the trailer and a lot of the dailies (copies of footage with no touching up or integration of computer graphics). It looks like a real action blockbuster!

ARE YOU ALLOWED TO DO WHATEVER YOU WANT WITH THE GAME, OR ARE THERE RESTRICTIONS PLACED UPON YOU?

We've pretty much had a free reign (if you'll excuse the pun) working on the game; we were in the very lucky position of seeing the script way in advance of film production and had

already thought this would make a great game concept before the movie was confirmed. Spyglass and BAM! have encouraged us to be creative with the licence in order to develop the depth and variety of gameplay we had set as our target. This is best demonstrated in the material we drew on from the numerous changes throughout the scripting process. We've seen over eight versions now, but there were aspects that were in some of the scripts we decided to use, such as the land-based dragons that aren't in the final movie.

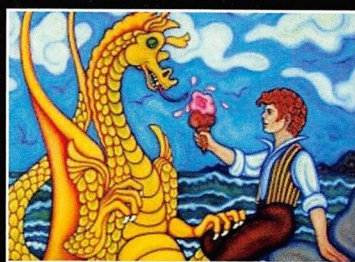
WHAT'S EASIEST – CREATING SOMETHING NEW YOURSELF, OR HAVING TO ADAPT OTHER PEOPLES' IDEAS AND STORIES?

Neither, both involve a creative process that is different in some respects and similar in others. At the end of the day the difficult process is coming up with a game design that you feel is going to be fun and challenging for the player. It's just as difficult to work within restrictions of another intellectual property as it is to originate a universe for this yourself, as there are no rules or guidelines to follow, effectively a blank sheet of canvas.

REIGN OF FIRE A BRIEF HISTORY OF DRAGONS



TIMELESS An astonishing and beautiful beast.



LADY DRAGON No wonder he's laughed at. He's a big puff.



WELCOME TO MY WORLD Not included: a social life.



DON'T TRUST HIM PETE Pure Disney dragon propaganda.

Sadly dragons ceased to exist ever. This is mainly due to the fact that they're made up. But such is the apparent interest that the weekend news supplements persist in offering a gargantuan range of z-list artists' sculptures, each professing to offer the definitive "imagining" of these "astonishing and beautiful beasts". Sod that. Here's the only reference work you'll ever need when considering these, ahem... astonishing and beautiful beasts.

PUFF THE MAGIC DRAGON

A face-reddeningly arse children's ballad. Apparently lived by the sea. In a land called (somewhat conveniently for the sake of rhyming with sea) Honah Lee. Puff befriends a kid, they share adventures, kid gets bored and leaves dragon miserable and alone in a cave. Some cynics have cruelly suggested that the psychedelia-tinged lyrics are actually about drugs...

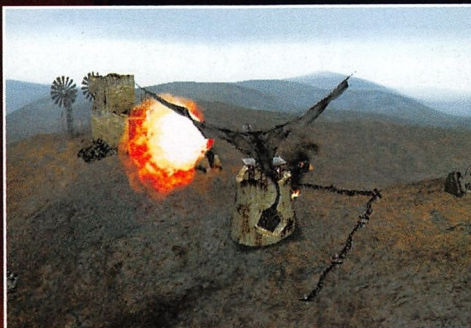
DUNGEONS & DRAGONS

The only game that will ensure you're never bothered by that annoying phenomenon of girls trying to have sex with you. You'll need some dice with 13 sides covered in squiggles and some cards with information pertaining to unpronounceable Elven rune stones on them. You'll also need to have a ginger beard, no fashion sense and be ugly.

PETE'S DRAGON

A post-Poppins and Bedknobs Disney animation/reality musical featuring a whiney, out of key brat and his pink-haired dragon chum. They live in a lighthouse and sing songs – such is the extent of the excitement. Constitutes a career high for ex-Carry On-er Jim Dale who appears as Dr Terminous. He's the baddy of the piece, in case you couldn't guess.

PAIN AND MISERY The most frightening wings since Paul McCartney's 70s project.



I CAN FLY! Playing as dragons offers an interesting gameplay alternative.



YOU SHALL ALL BURN Eat fire, you simple human peasantry scum!



HEAT SEEKING Dragons' vision is even better at night, hence the spotlights.



DRAGON ME DOWN TO YOUR LEVEL That damn beast burned my geraniums!

THE IMAGES YOU'VE RELEASED SO FAR HAVE A LOT OF GREAT FIRE EFFECTS IN THEM – HOW HARD ARE YOU PUSHING PS2?

In order to recreate the way that fire spreads in real life, Kuju has created a completely unique and new 'reactive fire system'. This pioneering technology means that every single item in the game is flammable; each has its own flash point, burn rate and the ability to set alight items near it. Essentially the fire 'lives', it moves from object to object heating its surroundings as it burns. On top of the fire system sits a sizeable number of special effects controllers linked into the engine's particle systems. For intense fires on some objects these systems create the main fire effects, fire detail effects, sparks, and smoke. For a small fire containing just 30 objects this system may contain over 2000 active particles at any one time.

With this level of fire control and effects, it wasn't a huge surprise when we started to hit the PS2's drawing limit. Despite requiring very little CPU time, *Reign of Fire* pushes the PS2 to its limits to render its fire.

WE'VE HEARD THERE'S A LEVEL SET IN LONDON – IS THAT TRUE? WILL WE RECOGNISE ANY OF IT?

Yes it is true. Although most of London has been laid to waste by the dragons, a number of key landmarks can still be found. You'll be able to recognise the Houses of Parliament, The Tower of London and Tower Bridge, not to mention a few wrecked London buses.

ARE THE OTHER LOCATIONS BASED ON REAL PLACES?

Very loosely. Apart from London we have missions in Norfolk based around the castle that you'll see in the film, and also we introduced missions set in Dover with white cliffs and a port. Many of the vehicles and buildings found in the game are based around those used in the film and reference material was also provided by Spyglass. Tanc, our Lead Artist, also went over to the site of the film set in Ireland to take photos that he and his team used when building the models for the game.

HOW MANY LOCATIONS ARE THERE GOING TO BE IN TOTAL?

There are three locations in total: Norfolk, Dover and London.

A LOT OF THE IMAGES SHOW TANKS AND OTHER BIG MILITARY HARDWARE... HOW MANY VEHICLES CAN YOU CONTROL?

In the human missions the player will drive four different vehicles. In each mission the player vehicle is pre-determined and the mission is based around the strengths of that particular vehicle. These vehicles are the Mini Buggy, the Jeep, the Abrams Tank, and the 4x4 Fire Truck.

DO YOU THINK DRAGONS ARE UNFAIRLY TREATED BY THE MEDIA, WHICH ALWAYS PORTRAYS THEM AS THE BAD GUYS?

I think there are plenty of friendly dragons out there such as Spyro, so they're not always portrayed as bad guys. On balance, if you were faced with a hungry, 20-ton fire-breathing dragon, you would make the assumption he was a bad guy and not hang around to find out.



GETTING LAIRY Press Up twice. Game complete.



GRRR... He's really as harmless as Lee Nutter.



WHEELIE CRAZY It's like they were all high on drugs!!!



BAD HOBBIT Smaug. Much less nice than Spyro.

DRAGON'S LAIR

Desperately piss playable-cartoon coin-op in which you played Dirk, a knight attempting to (yawn) save a princess from (snore) a dragon. The amount of influence the player had over proceedings proved comparable to that of a vegan picketing McDonalds. It's available on a 'playable' DVD for use with PS2. But don't waste your time on it. Just don't, okay.

THE DRAGON KNOWN AS... SPYRO

Purple babyish dragon first sighted in his own PSone hop, skip and flap-tastic platformer. Nice enough for the young 'uns but made more wrinkled gamers return to pretending to be a guy called Solid Snake. Is soon to be winging his way (do you see what we did there?) onto PS2 in *Spyro: Enter the Dragon Fly*. Bloody brilliant.

CHORLTON AND THE WHEELIES

Perennial student wheeze #23. "Oooh, do you remember *Chorlton and the Wheelies*? He was a dragon and he looked after all the Wheelies, who were like Weebles only with wheels. Anyway, it had a great theme choon, I'll try and sing it, no, no I will ... hang on, oh god I can't believe I'm doing this it's soooo funny, pahahah..."

THE DRAGON IN... THE HOBBIT

Smaug is the gold-hoarding dragon in the diet *Lord of the Rings* novel. Living under a mountain he breaks his napping only to burn some dwarves. He gets knobbed in the end by some other dwarves, and apparently a man. This is all the info PSW has as none of us has read the thing (thanks to Mummy Pierce for the précis).



ATTACK OF THE CLONES THE DIGITAL REVOLUTION

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**EXCLUSIVE
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**Jeffery
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Spirit: The future of animation

**From R2D2
to Mini-Me**

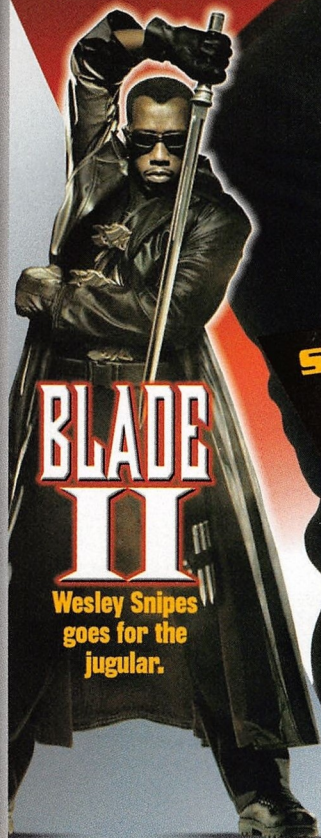
Top Ten Movie Midgets

**"I SEE DEAD
PEOPLE."**

Sixth Sense's classic
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Star Wars poster,
Bond Boxes plus
Dreamworks packs.



**BLADE
II**

Wesley Snipes
goes for the
jugular.

**SHAKEN NOT
STIRRED**

**40 YEARS OF
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BOND**

DVD REVIEWS: Star Wars:
Attack of The Clones, Blade II,
Fatal Attraction, Saturday Night
Fever, Red Curtain Trilogy

FILM REVIEWS:
Changing Lanes, S1mone,
Crackerjack, Undercover
Brother, Banger Sisters



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REVIEWS

ATTENTION! THIS SECTION CONTAINS EVERYTHING YOU NEED TO DECIDE WHAT TO BUY, AND WHAT TO LEAVE ALONE.

MEET THE TEAM

HELLO, WE'RE THE TEAM, AND WE'RE PLEASED TO MEET YOU, TOO.



/ DAVID WILDGOOSE EDITOR

Game of the month: *Ratchet & Clank*. I'll put my hands up and say I was sceptical at first, but it's has won me over again and again and again. Brilliant stuff!

In real life I'd like to crash: Oh, forget real life. I still need one more gold medal in *Burnout 2*'s crash mode.

Looking forward to: Trying to squeeze all the big Xmas releases into next issue. Half-page reviews all round, then.



/ DANIEL STAINES WRITER

Game of the month: *Kingdom Hearts*. It's fun letting Donald and Goofy die over and over again. Their tortured yelps are like music to my ears.

In real life I'd like to crash: A tank into Oprah Winfrey's living room. And then shoot her with it. Repeatedly.

Looking forward to: *Silent Hill 3*. What could be better than a combination of 80s electro-pop and evil, festering ghouls? Just look at The Cure!



/ JOHN DEWHURST WRITER

Game of the month: *Gravit...* just kidding. It's got to be *Final Fantasy X*. I only just got round to playing it and I can't stop!

In real life I'd like to crash: Cid's airship in *FFX* into Mount Gagazet, thus killing everyone on board and giving me my life back.

Looking forward to: *FFX: The Gilly Adventures*. You know, those spin-offs featuring Yuna and Rikku and Lulu.



/ MARCH STEPNIK WRITER

Game of the month: Not *Madden 2003*, sadly. Someone gave it to Mikey to review instead.

In real life I'd like to crash: Tackle whoever's responsible for not sending me a copy of *Madden 2003*.

Looking forward to: *Madden 2003*. Yes, still! I'll play it eventually... No, I'm not bitter. Not at all.



/ JACKSON GOTHE-SNAPE WRITER

Game of the month: *Timesplitters 2*. Multiplayer this time. Monkey Assist especially. It's genius, too!

In real life I'd like to crash: *[To the bottom of the office Pro Evo league, with any luck - Ed]*. Nice try, but no chance.

Looking forward to: *Pro Evolution Soccer 2*. I'm itching to guide my beloved Amsterdam to the title. Go, Jari, go!



/ GARY CUTLACK WRITER

Game of the month: *Red Faction 2*. Because I enjoy blowing chunks. You know what I mean.

In real life I'd like to crash: A shopping trolley into one of those teetering stacks of canned food you see in supermarkets. Hilarious!

Looking forward to: *Sly Cooper and the Thievius Racoonus*. No reason, really, I just like saying the name.



/ MIKEY FOLEY WRITER

Game of the month: *Red Faction 2*. And not just 'cos my t-shirt is red either. It's ludicrously entertaining and I suck at *TS2* multiplayer.

In real life I'd like to crash: A plane into... No, better not say that. Maybe a small boat... No, no that either. Damn.

Looking forward to: Seeing if either of those two *Lord of the Rings* game is actually any cop.



/ STEVEN WILLIAMS WRITER

Game of the month: *Burnout 2*. Fastest. Coolest. Sexiest. Game. Ever. Period. Oh yeah.

In real life I'd like to crash: Into Michael Schumacher on the first corner of Monza, taking him out of the race. Just to see the reaction of the rabid Ferrari fans.

Looking forward to: *F1 2002*. Not really.

THE SCORING SYSTEM

PSW RATINGS

THE PSW SCORING SYSTEM IS DESIGNED TO MAKE ALL YOUR GAMES PURCHASING DECISIONS SIMPLE. HERE'S HOW TO TRANSLATE THOSE NUMBERS INTO DEFINITIVE ADJECTIVES.

10/10	ESSENTIAL
9/10	BRILLIANT
8/10	GREAT
7/10	GOOD
6/10	DECENT
5/10	AVERAGE
4/10	POOR
3/10	BAD
2/10	BLOODY RUBBISH
1/10	AVOID AT ALL COSTS



PSW GAME OF THE MONTH

The Game of the Month Award is precisely what it says, the title that in PSW's opinion is the essential purchase of the month. In the event of multiple games receiving the same score, we simply pick the one we think is the must-have option if you can only afford one game a month. Go and buy it now. Run!



PSW MUST BUY

Typically awarded to games that score 8/10 or above, representing one of the best in its genre. So if you're a fan of this particular type of game, then you'll be more than happy with this purchase. Simply, if you like this type of game, you 'must buy'. Clever eh?

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ONE DAY REVIEWS WILL BE 3D HOLOGRAMS SPINNING SILENTLY ABOVE YOUR WATCH, BUT UNTIL THEN, WE'LL USE PIECES OF PAPER STUCK TOGETHER. TRY NOT TO MIX THEM UP, NOW.

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RED FACTION 2



TYPE	SHOOTER
PLAYERS	1-4
OUT	NOVEMBER 22
DISTRIBUTOR	THQ
PRICE	\$99.95
DEVELOPER	VOLITION
RATED	M15+

SEE IT ON DVD

- / Chaos and destruction
- / See the developers' secrets in multiplayer!
- / Guns. Lots of guns.

IT'S ANOTHER SEQUEL, BUT IF THEY'RE ALL LIKE THIS WE DON'T REALLY MIND. RED FACTION 2 IS THE BEST THING SINCE DICED DEAD.

RED FACTION WAS A GAME THAT promised many things, but lost its direction somewhere in development and drew away from exploiting the real power of its technology. It remained an atmospheric and mostly entertaining shooter, but the impressive real-time level wrecking of Geo-Mod was reduced to little more than a gimmick. The gripping possibilities of the tech demo – redirecting flows of liquid by destroying their channels, vapourising bridges from beneath the feet of your enemies, blocking corridors with steam from shattered pipes – branched off into a dark alternate future unreachable from here. Our *Red Faction* became a shooter much like any other. But now this sequel is here to put it all right.

We flew all the way to Champaign, Illinois to bring you this review, and found not a trace of fear in developer Volition's corridors. Actually, we drove some of the way, and walked around the airports, but you know what we mean. We found only

excitement about this vastly improved follow up, and having played it, we now know their confidence was well placed. In looks, feel and excitement, *RF2* blows its predecessor to smithereens. From the very beginning, Geo-Mod technology is at the forefront of your activities, rather than providing momentarily interesting holes in the background. You find things, you blow

them all to hell. In Americo-speak, this "rocks". And to translate that into English, it's "really rather good, actually".

Once you gain control after the introductions you're faced with the unscalable wall of a fortress. The doors are locked. There's no bell. In any other game you'd wander off in search of a key, maybe stopping to talk to a man who's standing stock



DISAPPOINTING The 'Give Peace A Chance' rally was a failure.



IN THE BEGINNING Your troops go in by dropship.



TWO BLUE Armoured soldiers take a lot of killing. Note the blood stains behind...



NICE HAIR A future war with homicidal Bros clones beckons.



WRONG ANSWER And he calls himself a receptionist? Oh, he didn't.

still in the middle of a path for no reason at all. In this game you go through the wall. Then you blow out the foundations of the guard towers, letting the collapse kill the aggressors that top them. And then, once you've cleared the place out and demolished everything the local artisans had worked so hard to build, your squadmate blasts in with an enormous gunship. The next door might be too tough even for your rocket launcher, but it can't withstand the ship, and the new 'squad' dynamic means it's your job to secure the area so it can go to work. This kind of thing is pretty much the limit of your responsibilities to the group – taking an objective so another member can operate, or to fight alongside them – as you're never directly in control of anyone but Alias. Other games, such as *Project Eden* and the upcoming *Ghost Recon*, give you a real squad to control, but are far slower and more complex to play. Anyone

who knows either title (*Ghost Recon* is already available on PC) will appreciate the simplicity and focus *Red Faction 2* embodies. You feel like you're fighting within a team, but you're always free to concentrate on the important things. You know, like blowing stuff up.

WHAT'S MY NAME AGAIN?

So you're Alias, the demolitions expert. Naturally you get to play with all the fun stuff, the explosives and heavy weaponry that'll cut a man clean in two, leaving just his legs to slowly topple to the rubble-strewn floor. The five other members turn up at various junctures to unleash their skills and help you through. Shrike, for instance, is the transportation man, and deals with all your vehicular needs. And if the squeaking of his tonsils sounds familiar, that's because he's voiced by none other than Jason Statham, famous

cockney geezer Bacon from *Lock, Stock and Two Smoking Barrels* and lead operative Frank Martin in *The Transporter*. Shrike is something of a headcase, as you'll find out during the sections where you let him drive in order to carry on shooting all the things you haven't shot so far. For instance, when in the tank, Mr Shrike clearly thinks it'll fit down alleyways and through walls much better than it'll go down the road. It's just another of the ways in which *Geo-Mod* is brought to the fore, and it's more than just eye candy, presenting a challenge that otherwise wouldn't occur – you never really know where the next enemy is going to appear from, because up until two seconds ago that was a wall.

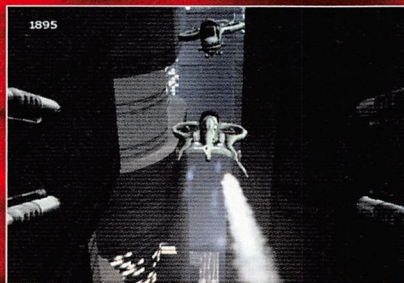
Sexual equality appears to be one of the few social aspects to have improved in this dark and bloody future, and there are two female members of your team. Tangier is good for useful info on the best routes, the whereabouts of enemy forces and their strength. While nowhere near as freeform as the great *Deus Ex*, *Red Faction 2* has several branches along its length – and heeding Tangier's intelligence can give you a considerable advantage, letting you find a less well-guarded route and, say, a sneaky way up to a deadly opponent, rather than rushing in head on.

Celebrity fans keep reading, because Statham's not the only famous voice here: the gravely mumbblings of combat specialist Molov are perhaps even more recognisable, having been provided by Mr Lance 'I was Bishop in *Aliens*' >

/ SHRIKE
CLEARLY
THINKS A
TANK WILL
FIT DOWN
ALLEYS AND
THROUGH
WALLS
BETTER
THAN IT'LL
GO DOWN
THE ROAD /



"TRY 123" Tangier can hack security systems and be clever.



FLY, MY PRETTIES One of the on-rails sections involves gunships.

QUAD DAMAGE

UP TO FOUR CAN FIGHT IT OUT IN RED FACTION 2 – AND IT'S ACTUALLY FUN

40 MAPS, 41 PLAYER MODELS AND A GOOD SOLID frame rate are all massive improvements over the first game's efforts – multiplayer is now a viable option. Having no fewer than eight modes also helps, as alongside the standard Deathmatch you'll find Arena and Bagman, plus Team versions of all three. Then there's Capture The Flag and the hidden Regime mode (a bag-holding variant involving the

dictator's hat). Kill for this outsized chapeau and wear it as long as possible. But once it's on, you're unarmed. How do you unlock it? It's something to do with the way you kill Sopot in the single player game. We'll leave it at that.

Interestingly, you've also got the ability to create bots. Up to five AI bots are associated with your profile, and you can design and train these

guys to act as your squad. Initially you have 100 points to distribute among such abilities as damage, health, accuracy, camping tendency and aggressiveness, but all stats can be improved by fighting. Max them all out and you have super-bots, ultra hard teammates to memory card into your friend's game with a nuclear powered tin opener for the whup-ass. They really are nails.



BAG OF NICE Loads of modes adds longevity.

LOOK TWO'S SHOOTING NOW We must apologise for that.

DO I KNOW YOU? There are 41 characters to play as.





Henriksen. You may also know him from such talking pictures as *Scream 3*, *Millennium* and *Alien 3*. We find this move towards famous Hollywood actors intriguing – not only does it mean voice acting of a whole different order, but it lends a certain validity to gaming as a whole, particularly as the game isn't a license from a film these guys are in – it's not as if they've been compelled to take part. On the other hand, Henriksen also narrated the TV special *High Speed Impacts* recently, so he obviously needs the money. Next

WELL, BLOW ME

WISE MAN SAY, THINGS GO BANG WHEN I PRESS THIS.

/THERE ARE 17 WEAPONS IN RED FACTION 2, BUT naturally, the most entertaining ones are those that rearrange the landscape. Even if you happen to be holding, say, a shotgun or a pistol, you can still take out a wall (or a brace of attackers) without having to switch to another gun. Pressing down on the left stick causes Alias to lob a grenade into the mix, regardless of what weapon he's holding at the time.

This leaves you free to enjoy the new twin machine guns, reloadable independently to provide a constant stream of fire, or perhaps tinker with the cocky joys of pistol whipping. Note that melee weapons have otherwise been abandoned, however, and the first game's electric prod has been replaced with a longer-range stun grenade. These momentarily turn your screen blue and reverse the controls, so make sure you stay on the right end of them. They're particularly good in multiplayer skirmishes. And look out for the so-called objective charges, ghostly imprints of bombs in strategically important locations. Place one for hidden bonus joy and big heap explosions. Yes.

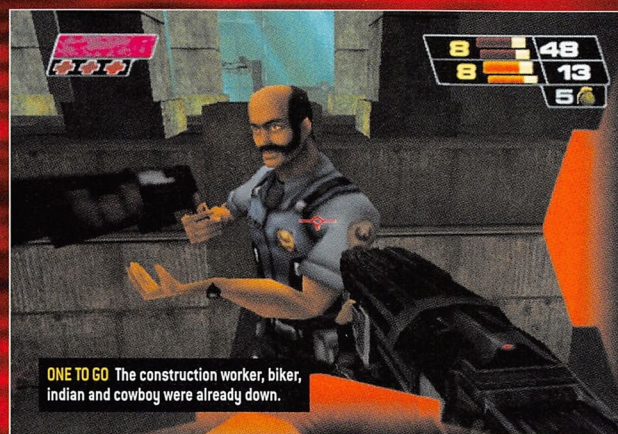


LIGHT OF THE CHARGE BRIGADE Hit 'X' for bonus explosions.

it'll probably turn out he's not even really a cyborg. Life can be so disappointing sometimes.

EXPLODE MY BITCH UP

Okay psychos, you can't kill your teammates, so don't even try. They don't like it. They work pretty intelligently anyway, so it won't be frustration that makes you want to. The AI of your enemies and teammates alike is vastly improved from the first game. There, the cracks showed particularly badly in the stealth section, where your weapons were gone or useless – enemies would react with telepathic speed to a gun fifty feet away, but ignore running thudsteps just behind their hip pocket. It's not like that now. For starters, Volition has learnt not to take the player's weapons away in the first place: feedback revealed that you lot hate that, especially after taking so long to build the collection. The tricky and pace-denting stealth levels are gone anyway, and the AI is simply far stronger – and brighter – in the first place. If you run into a room alone, for instance, right into a pack of fighters, they'll launch at you without



/ OUTGUN THEM AND THEY'LL TURN AND RUN. LIKE LADIES /

hesitation. But if you and your team outnumber or outgun them they'll turn and run. Like ladies. Like ladies in difficult shoes.

Voice prompts make their feelings even more obvious, as they'll jeer or wail, depending on the circumstance. It all makes it just that little bit more satisfying when you vapourise their torsos; gives it that personal touch. As you progress you realise enemy behaviour is influenced by more than just this, too. 'Cannon fodder' security staff are far more likely to leg it than the elite



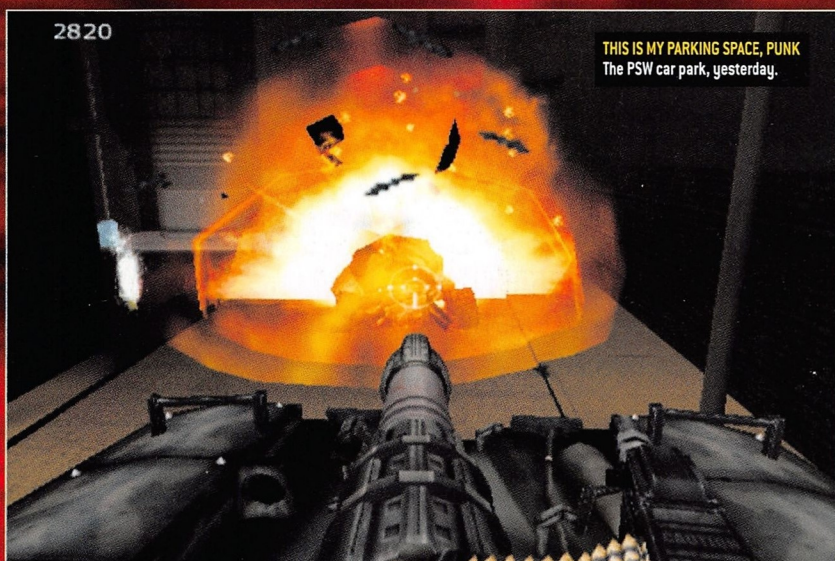
SWIM LIKE THE BIRDS He doesn't care if he looks silly, he's dead.



GLASS OF 2002 P Diddy objected to Britney's mixing desk.



FACE / OFF You can gib them, but they don't do bullet holes. Boo.



THIS IS MY PARKING SPACE, PUNK
The PSW car park, yesterday.



nightmares encountered later in the game, and can stand less of the pain you're dishing out before they dribble into the afterlife piece by piece. The gabbling, the taunting, the screams for mercy, the howls of pain... large battles create a cacophony of suffering akin to an American chat show audience, but don't worry, it's not as bad. It's a proper war. Add this to the sound of collapsing walls and colossal explosions and you've got screams + bangs + gibs x rubble, which equals... wait, carry the six... which equals fun. If you hold the calculator upside down these numbers spell fun. They do. Look.

THAT CAN'T BE RIGHT

In fact, there's so much going on in this game it's hard to know where to start. Fortunately we've already started, so it doesn't matter. But now would be a good time to explain why you and your troops are Red Faction fighters, when this is occurring on Earth (blue and green) rather than Mars (red) and you're a soldier in the dictator's army (not exactly anti-establishment). This game is set a few years after the uprising on Mars, and the Faction's success has inspired rebellion further afield. A cell arises on Earth, fighting the Stalin-esque dictator Victor Sopot, for whom you were once a soldier. In fact, for the first mission of

the game you still *are* in his army. But then it all goes wrong – Sopot attempts to create unbeatable warriors using nano-augmentation, but finds he can't control them. Can't control *you*. He tries to wipe you all out, generating instead zombified, unthinking drones. But you and your super soldier team don't want to be wiped out. So, just a few years after your initial mission, you end up allied with the rebellion and fighting your own forces.

So these opposing forces are far more intelligent than before. And you may be a demolitions expert, but that doesn't mean they're lacking heavy explosives of their own. Take cover behind a pillar or wall and like as not you'll find it rapidly disappearing, exposing you to withering >



OUCH Red arrows locate damage sources. And fly smoky jets.



METAL ROBOT OF DEATH
You get to drive one of these!

/ ALL ENEMIES CAN BE TAKEN HEAD ON, BUT SOMETIMES THERE MIGHT BE A BETTER WAY /

fire once again. You're always encouraged to fight, not to the exclusion of thinking about tactics (in fact, a little lateral thinking is often rewarded), but certainly enough to keep the pace high. Think on your feet and you'll be okay.

The Earth location and urban settings provide far more possibilities than the unavoidably unchanging mines of Mars. You fight right through the grandiose Public Information Bureau – a rich place full of impressively reflective marble floors, built to shower the populace with heroic lies while they starve in squalor – to mangled streets, bombed-out houses and desperate-looking bases. You can blow right through walls to find sneakier routes, climb buildings for a better view of snipers or onrushing forces, and take out structures such as upper floors or telegraph poles to expose or crush your enemies. And this is where that lateral thinking comes in – all enemies can be taken head on, but sometimes there might be a better way, and that way can reward you with more than just the immediate tactical advantage. Each mission has hidden objectives, and completing them unlocks further goodies such as multiplayer maps and skins. Blow down a bridge to escape a room in one case, for instance, and you'll meet the hidden objective. Some involve more random things – smashing every computer in a control room, say –



TOWERING INFERNO Bring it all cascading to the floor.



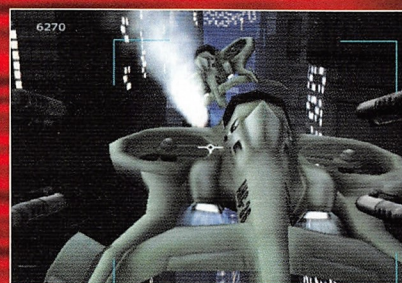
DOZY Mick constantly falls asleep on the job. So we've just fired him.

Light Rounds picked up

but you'll find many from just considering your environment and using it to your advantage. And from blowing the hell out of it.

While the first game looked pretty good, its frame rate was sometimes disappointing and the whole thing could chug somewhat. Two-player, frankly, was awful. This time the single player game is vastly improved – not just in speed, but in level of detail – and multiplayer is now usable. Four-player matches, unavailable in the first game, run significantly better even than the old two-player. As with seemingly everything in this game, there's more of it and it's better. The levels are filled with clutter and debris, giving them an

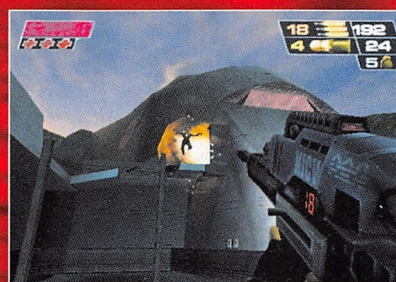
authentically grungy feel – especially under the fantastic new rain – and of course, they're not just rock tunnels. Much of the game takes place in streets and buildings, although you will head underground from time to time to visit the sewers. It's videogame law. At least they look good: shoot into water and you're rewarded with a suitably noisy splash, while on the roof mottled reflections and shadows shimmy in the half-darkness. Areas such as these have less human presence, believably, but that doesn't mean there's less action. Here you'll find spider bots that leap towards you on sickly metal legs before exploding on your head. *Damn* this future. There are also



LITTLE SHIP OF HORRORS They look great when they blow up.



FLY-BY SHOOTING Careful of the civilian workers! It's bad Karma.



BOOM, SHAKE THE ROOM Blowing them off ledges is our hobby.



SHOT IN THE DARK Tunnels are patrolled by damaging mechs.



AMAZING ON THE GUITAR Grenade throwing reveals three hands!



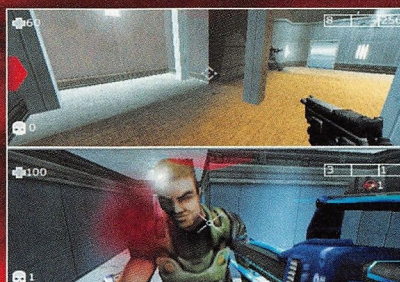
FIGHT NIGHT Night vision is most useful in the sewers.



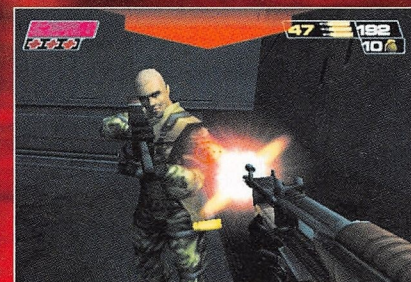
PANIC ATTACK Stick mines to enemies. Go!



RUSTY SHERIFF'S BADGE
In the future, all ferrous metals will have corroded.



FORGETFUL "Excuse me, have you seen a blue gun anywhere?"



BLOW BACK Use non-explosive weapons for up-close combat.



armed, floating sentry robots to contend with, though a good old fashioned pair of shells from a shotgun makes them look less futuristic pretty damn quickly.

FRAG YOU VERY MUCH

Although the ultra-powerful, see-through-walls Rail Driver is back, those annoying sudden deaths are gone, so even when it gets tougher it doesn't get irritating. Alias has three 'lives', replenished by health packs, and will heal a large percentage of his health bar after avoiding damage for ten seconds. This makes the sections held down by snipers far more of the entertaining puzzle they should be, rather than the attempt/fail/reload patience tests of before. It also means the checkpoint save system replacing the save-anywhere style of before is not a problem, as you're far less likely to die in the first place.

You should have realised by now that there's plenty to shoot, blow up and knock down. You're not going to run out of bad guys, but that doesn't mean you can go round offing civilians willy-nilly and expect no comebacks. *RF2* runs a 'karma' system because, after all, you're supposed to be a hero [not a chameleon]. Heroic deeds, such as protecting civilians from Sopot's forces and absolutely not shooting them in the head and neck, sees your karma rating shooting up. Slaughter everyone you meet, such as the reporter broadcasting on live TV, and it goes down. So what? Your karma rating affects the ending. Without giving too much away, there are 'four or five' different endings, ranging from good to bad.

Alternate endings always give extra replay value, and when all you've got to do is go back and execute absolutely everybody to see a different one... it's very tempting. To describe it as the thinking man's shooting game would be pushing it, but mindless it's certainly not.

The original *Red Faction* may have caught the fear, backing away from its own destiny, but for this sequel, only Sopot's super-charged fighting forces need be scared. Of you. Geo-Mod is now part of the main game, and it's a treat. It's also better looking, more fun and far more action-oriented than before. And, as a single player experience that hangs together as more than just a set of missions, it even tops *TimeSplitters 2*. And that's saying something.

/ STEVEN WILLIAMS

VERDICT

PSW

UPPERS

- Far more hectic than before
- Vastly improved missions
- Hilarious destruction
- Much more than a rehash

DOWNERS

- Still occasional jerkiness
- Can feel a bit 'on rails'
- Not massively long
- Multiplayer still lacking

GRAPHICS - Smoother and a lot more detailed now

9

SOUND - Beefy and often chaotic

8

LIFESPAN - Around ten hours, but much replayability

7

OVERALL SCORE

RF2 is another sequel taking an appreciable step on. Gameplay is refined, graphically it's a beauty and Geo-Mod is now a key element. Overall, it's almost as good as *TimeSplitters 2*.

9



RATCHET & CLANK



THE SEQUEL TO JAK & DAXTER?

NO, IT'S JUST ANOTHER CUTESY DUO ATTEMPTING TO REINVENT THE PLATFORM GAME.

TYPE	ACTION ADVENTURE
PLAYERS	1
OUT	NOW
DISTRIBUTOR	SONY
PRICE	\$99.95
DEVELOPER	INSOMNIAC
RATED	GB+

WHATEVER HAPPENED TO THE GOOD

old-fashioned platform game? It wasn't all that many years ago that it was the single definitive videogame genre. On

PSone you couldn't leap into the air without landing on the head of a Spyro, a Crash, a Klonoa or any one of their cutesy, inbred woodland friends. Back then gaming was all jumpy this and jumpy that, while game levels were full of moving platforms, crumbling platforms, bouncy platforms, spinning platforms and platforms that didn't do anything at all. It was a simple, safer time. It was reassuring.

Today things are a little more confusing and complicated. Games no longer have neatly signposted, linear levels you can easily traverse from point A to point B. Instead they now have worlds, huge open environments with more routes to pursue than a swinger's party. More often than not you've also got the choice of which world to explore in the first place.

And it's not enough to simply jump on a bad guy's head any more either. Go on, just try it; it's a one-way trip you'll soon regret. Rather you're forced to master the use of a plethora of weapons, gadgets and special abilities in order to eradicate the enemy population. Some games even provide two playable characters, thus doubling the array of potential methods of destruction and negotiation at your hands.

Times have certainly changed and if *Ratchet & Clank* is any indication, then that change has

undoubtedly been for the better. Developer Insomniac Games may have created the original *Spyro the Dragon*, but it clearly became bored with the predictable platformer formula. *Ratchet & Clank* is Insomniac's effort to turn the platform genre on its head. Which it does, deftly and with effortless panache.

INSPECTING GADGETS

Like the similarly named *Jak & Daxter* before it, the possibilities are expanded thanks to the enormous worlds, multiple routes, multi-tiered objectives and free-roaming level structure. But *Ratchet & Clank* goes a step further by adding more weapons than you'll see in the average first-person shooter (you'll hoard more ammo here than your entire squad in *Red Faction 2*) plus a host of imaginative gadgets



CHOMP-CHOMP The dudes from the Glove of Doom get to work.



PIED PIPER They'll even follow Ratchet, searching for enemies.



IT'S BRUCE SPENCE Take to the skies to avoid those troublesome jumpy-jumpy sections.

with which to play and experiment throughout the adventure. And not once is it necessary to jump on someone's bloody head.

The story all begins with Ratchet – the cute animal who could be a cat but might be a rabbit or, more plausibly, some mutant alien concoction of both – stranded on the planet Veldin thanks to a malfunctioning robot drive in his one-seater spaceship. He witnesses another craft plummet from the sky not too far away and sets off to investigate the crash site. The only survivor is a small robot.

Meanwhile the dastardly Drek has decided the only way to revive his ailing planet is to quite literally steal the best parts of every other planet in the solar system and, with a bit of DIY know-how, glue them all together to start afresh. The unfortunate side effect of each planet having huge chunks ripped out is that they'll veer out of orbit and be immolated by collision with the sun.

So it turns out Ratchet's new found robotic friend is searching for the great Captain Quark, media celebrity and hero to millions (think Ray Martin but with a squarer jaw), whom he hopes will be able to defeat Drek and save the galaxy. Coincidentally, he can also power Ratchet's spaceship. Thus a deal is struck: he'll help Ratchet get back in the air if Ratchet helps him find Quark. He hits his head – "Clank!" – on the ship as he climbs aboard so Ratchet christens him Clank. How sweet.

Once the actual game is underway, the first thing that'll make you go "Wow!" is how stunningly gorgeous everything looks. It's one of those games where the opening cut-scene seamlessly segues to playable game without you even realising. So you sit there for a few moments wondering why nothing is happening before it occurs to you that –



BACKSEAT DRIVER "Hey, who're talking to? What's going on?!"

yes – the game has actually started. You'll think, "I can't believe I'm controlling this", before muttering an awe-struck "Wow!" that borders on incredulity.

Numerous factors contribute to the ocular orgy unveiled during the opening scenes. There's the animation of not only Ratchet himself but every moving entity in the world; it's all as super-smooth as Jackson when there's a work experience girl in the office. Then there's the astonishing environmental flourishes liberally applied to every surface and structure; from the sizeable ornate buildings in the distance to the small flowers and fungi at your feet, the detail lavished by the artists can only be applauded.

And finally there's the sheer scope of the world and massive draw distance. See those towering buildings, rocky mountains or bulbous space stations in the background of each screenshot? Far from mere two-dimensional backdrops, more often than not such expansive vistas play host to fully playable areas that you can access without seeing anything even remotely resembling a loading screen. Wow, indeed.

MILLIONS OF MINIONS

None of this visual opulence comes at a cost either, as the entire game maintains a consistently high framerate with nary a hint of slowdown to be seen. Which is all the more impressive when you consider the amount of enemies onscreen at any particular instant. Our heroic duo are besieged by Drek's minions at every turn. Android dogs, cheeky bomb throwers who burrow into the ground to hide, sand-dwelling piranhas, lightning-spewing aerial tripods, balls of green slime, almighty tanks, explosive homing



MONO-BROWS We don't want to see the nose these guys are from.



ATTACK OF THE TRIPODS Ratchet will do anything to get a screw. The cad.



IT'S BUT A SCRATCH He may be legless, but he can still fight with those circular saws.

mines, you name your favourite bizarre enemy and it's probably featured somewhere here.

Each foe sports its own unique attack pattern, whether it's through one of the innumerable weapons, sheer weight of numbers, ranged, melee, aerial, or ground-based tactics. It means you're always kept on your toes as you're forced to adapt to each new situation. Although Ratchet has a default wrench attack that's surprisingly effective, rare is the area in which you can rely on the one standard strategy for defeating opponents.

If all this seems to imply that *Ratchet & Clank* features a hefty amount of combat, then you're on the right track. For a mutant alien cat rabbit, Ratchet is remarkably well stocked with weapons. There are well over 30 different gadgets to be found throughout the game, over half of which have the sole purpose of causing as much destruction as possible. There's the Pyrocitor, a fuel-hungry flamethrower; the Walloper, an over-sized boxing glove that does exactly what it says on the box; the Bomb Glove, a glove with bombs (natch!); and my personal favourite, the Glove of Doom, which spawns four tiny bots who chase after enemies, chuckling all the while, and explode on impact.

BUCKET OF BOLTS

Cleverly, you don't simply gain access to better weapons as you progress further. Indeed, it's tough to

**/ YOU NAME
YOUR FAVE
BIZARRE
ENEMY
AND IT'S
PROBABLY
FEATURED
SOMEWHERE
HERE /**



HOT PURR-SUIT Grind, Ratchet, grind like you've never ground before! Or hit 'em with the wrench.

TONY WHO? Yes, that is actually a hoverboard. Even he looks surprised.



WEEEE! Remember, always wear a helmet. It keeps the nasty wind out of your eyes.

argue which weapon is superior — they're just different. And that's half the fun. Simply experimenting with each, discovering their strengths and weaknesses, and generally causing chaos with whatever you have immediately at hand is supremely entertaining. Some may be more pertinent in a particular circumstance — the Pyrocitor is useful against swarming enemies, for instance — but all are still likely to get you through any nasty situation. Which is handy when you run out of ammo for your preferred mode of inflicting death and either don't have enough bolts to buy some more or are too far from the nearest Gadgetron (i.e. a weapon vending machine) to replenish your clip anyway.

Speaking of which, economics in the *Ratchet & Clank* universe revolve around nuts and bolts — shops don't accept VISA, while the various people you

meet can only be bribed by handfuls of small metal screws. As such, you need to collect loads of the things. And they're just everywhere — strewn across the landscape, spilling out of recently dead enemies, and buried underground (and sucked up by your handy metal detector).

STERLING EFFORT

But this is no banal collect-a-thon where you're obliged to scour every nook and cranny for that last coin in order to unlock the next level. Insomniac has done a sterling job in pacing the distribution of nuts and bolts to ensure as little backtracking as possible. In my experience, I had to do the whole run around aimlessly to collect things maybe twice during the entire game. See, I told you it was turning the genre on its head!

THE SPICE OF LIFE!

MORE REASONS WHY THIS IS NO MERE PLATFORMER



Enter the prestigious hoverboard races. They're a stern challenge, full of wild jumps, insane speed boosts, explosive crates and perilous short-cuts, but you need to win them to progress.



Equip your grind boots for some Sonic style antics. Although a good way to collect much-needed nuts and bolts, beware the sudden gaps in the rails and the ubiquitous spiked mines.



Jump in a stationary gun emplacement and lay waste to any nearby enemies. Several turrets also need to be commandeered to demolish walls and prevent Drek's attack ships from blasting off.

QUICK DRAW

KEEP YOUR FINGER ON THE TRIGGER

Ratchet can easily access his arsenal of weapons thanks to this neat quick select menu. Hold down triangle then point the stick in the desired direction to choose your poison. You can even rearrange the menu to your heart's content so as to ensure your favoured weapons are within even easier reach, each placed in one of the four cardinal points - north, south, east and west.



Clank has a similar interface, only this time it's for the instructions he gives to his robotic helpers. Order them to Wait, Follow, Enter or Attack with the press of two buttons. Borrowing from PSone classic Abe's Oddysee, Clank uses these little guys to solve puzzles and beat up on bigger enemies. He usually has to rescue a certain number of them, too.



/ ECONOMICS IN THIS UNIVERSE REVOLVE AROUND NUTS AND BOLTS /

Thankfully freed from the perennial platformer problem, you're left to complete genuine mission objectives in order to progress through the worlds. Each world has up to six such objectives - which vary considerably, from infiltrating Drek's spacebase to winning a hoverboard race - and with often a handful of planets available to visit, there's rarely a lack of things to do. To a certain extent you can hop from one planet to the next, completing one task here then another one there, perhaps even

returning to old locations to access secret areas thanks to a newly acquired gadget.

Ultimately it's a linear game, but it feels wide open and brimming with possibilities - and that's what counts in the end. For that reason,

Ratchet & Clank is no longer a platform game. On one hand, it's a shooter; on another, it's a world exploration game; while on several other limbs, it meshes a host of other genres into its myriad sub and mini-games (see panel). Overall, it crams in enough stuff to adequately fill ten games without ever dipping in quality.

Vibrant and effervescent, *Ratchet & Clank* is one of the most complete and polished games yet seen on PS2. It's a must-have for Christmas. / DAVID WILDGOOSE



Ratchet's swingshot allows him to indulge in the kind of trapeze act that would make Tarzan proud. Simply fire your hook at any of those spinning yellow or green globes and it'll attach automatically.



Vertigo sufferers ought to tread warily in these magnetic boots. They'll stick to any such metal piping, allowing you to traverse precarious heights and even walk upside down. Don't look down!

VERDICT

PSW

UPPERS

- Unbelievably beautiful
- Two charming new stars
- So much to do
- And so much to do it with

DOWNERS

- Slightly easy
- Some gadgets seem superfluous
- The occasional glitch
- Not enough Clank!

GRAPHICS - Silky animation and stunning worlds

10

SOUND - Love the "K-ching!" of collecting metal

8

LIFESPAN - Huge galaxy, but not overly difficult

9

OVERALL SCORE

Possibly the most immediately playable game on PS2. Gorgeous to behold and an absolute joy to control. It's not just for kids, you know.

9



SUMMONER 2

SURE, IT'S KINDA LIKE THE FIRST ONE. BUT BETTER THIS TIME.

TYPE	RPG
PLAYERS	1
OUT	NOW
DISTRIBUTOR	THQ
PRICE	\$99.95
DEVELOPER	VIOLITION
RATED	TBA

SUMMONER 2 IS ARGUABLY ONE OF the least original PlayStation2 games released this year. With its relatively dated engine and real-time combat mechanics, it is the spitting image of its moderately successful predecessor. Oh sure, there's a new story and some new characters to go along with it, but everything else remains essentially untouched. It even features the same sound effects as the original game. If echoing past works were a federal crime, then there's absolutely no doubt in this reviewer's mind that the entire staff at Volition would now be pacing the cells of Death Row.

So why on Earth, you're wondering right after glancing at the final score, did this game rate so highly? Well, there's a fairly simple reason for that – it's fun. So much fun, in fact, that I'm willing to bet that most of you will forget just how blatantly unoriginal it is after a mere hour or two of play. Like its predecessor, *Summoner* 2 ensnares the player in a sticky web of delightfully simple combat and engaging side-quests that always manage to keep you playing much longer than any self respecting health professional would advise. We're talking addiction here, ladies and gents. We're talking the kind of addiction that keeps you up till sunrise and makes you miss meals and important social events like marriages and funerals. Trust us – it's hard to care about how the main character kind of looks like a character from the first game when

you've been playing for six hours straight and have skipped breakfast and lunch to do so.

But what is it about this game that makes it so unhealthily enticing? If it has to come down to a single reason, then I'd hazard to say that it's mostly to do with the overwhelming feeling of purpose that pervades the entire experience from start to finish. At no time during *Summoner* 2 will you feel like there's not enough to do. The very first location in the game, for example, is an island the size of a football field and it features no less than three sub-quests to complement the main narrative goals. And it's not like these sub-quests are pissy little diversions to get some crap items you'll never use anyway – they're thoughtful, engaging adventures in their own right that yield enticing rewards for those willing to embark on them.

Throughout the course of the game, the number of these sub-quests grows very large indeed and,

surprisingly, they always manage to complement the flow of the narrative instead of slowing it down. The same goes for the game's combat, which is a real-time affair that allows players to string together combos of melee and magical attacks to satisfyingly devastating effect. Like the original, parties are made up of three characters at a time, each of which can be controlled individually while a pre-selected AI script handles the other two. This opens up tactical advantages for the discerning gamer, because each of the game's characters has their own unique advantages that can be employed in relevant circumstances for profitable outcome. The thief character, for instance, can be used in 'solo-mode' to sneak about and silently assassinate sentries so the rest of the team may wander around unmolested. That may not constitute a revolutionary change in RPG game design, but it is undeniably enjoyable and a



CUT SOME RUG Or perhaps you'd prefer a shag, sir?



40 IN THE SHADE Daily exercise helps such poor circulation.

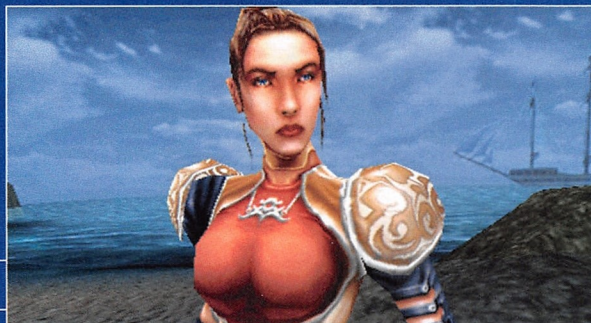
QUEEN FOR A DAY!

One of the most enjoyable things the player can do as the central protagonist, Queen Maia, is preside over the royal court and control the lives of the peasants and gentry who come in to plead their cases. Once upon a time, for example, a peasant came to the Queen and asked if his town should build a giant statue in honour of her majesty. Being a rampant egoist, the Queen of course said yes and sent him on his way. The next day, the peasant came back

IT'S REMARKABLY LIKE THE LIFE OF AN EDITOR!

and complained that the statue had come to life and was gleefully eating handfuls of women and children. Not knowing what to do, the Queen told him to send for the Mages Guild to stop it. Happily, the Mages Guild destroyed the monster, but they also destroyed the entire town with it. So the wise Queen decided to blame whole incident on them and had the entire guild executed to keep everything quiet. Now that's how you run a kingdom!

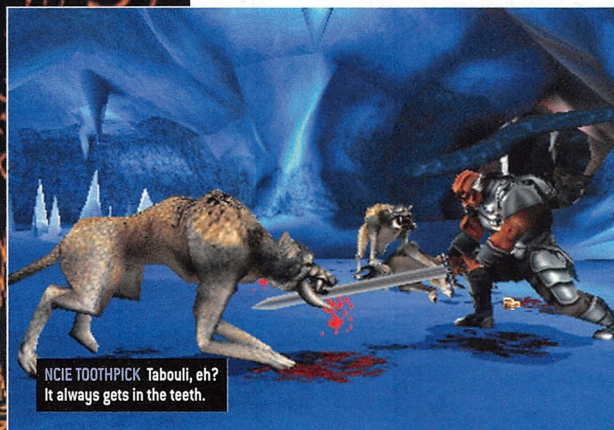
THAT'S HER MAJESTY TO YOU "I'm the court musician, I get paid to pen tuneful ditties. Here's a song all about the Queen's enormous..."



END OF THE LINE Of course it all hinges on some primitive elemental forces.



HORNY BEASTS Our Queen fights off a trio of would-be suitors.



NCIE TOOTHPICK Tabouli, eh? It always gets in the teeth.

definite departure from the standard Japanese combat models featured in a majority of PS2 RPGs.

Another way in which *Summoner 2* deviates from the PS2 RPG norm is in its central character development, which tends to focus more on the background of individual party members rather than their interaction with each other and the relationships they form as a result of that. Whether or not this is a good thing or a bad thing depends solely on what you look for in an RPG experience. If a strong emotional attachment to the game's protagonists is your cup of tea, then *Final Fantasy X* and the myriad of games like it would probably be better suited to your particular tastes. Those of us that would rather a fully realised gameworld replete with its own extensive history and mythology, however, will

find that Volition's efforts fit the bill perfectly.

Of course, that isn't to say that *Summoner 2* features a perfectly crafted narrative straight out of the pages of a Tolkien novel. While it's paced fluidly enough, the game's plot tends to be rather dry and predictable in places and will often leave less patient gamers hastily clicking through entire conversations just to get to the next combat encounter or side-quest. Similarly, the mythological and religious themes are great for those of us inclined to explore that kind of thing, but it can all get a bit heavy at times and may unfortunately influence lot of people to completely ignore the plot altogether. We don't suggest you do that, though, because the pool of extra information available is actually quite rewarding provided you've got the time to wade

/ STRING TOGETHER COMBOS OF MELEE AND MAGICAL ATTACKS /

into it. Think of the extra reading as another kind of side-quest where the reward is the best one of all – knowledge!

And on that exceptionally nerdy note, this review will be brought to a close. To finish off, this particular journo would like to extend his sincerest offering of kudos to everyone at Volition – thanks for not trying to fix something that was never broke in the first place, guys. *Summoner 2* is an excellent game. Thumbs up, indeed.

/ DANIEL STAINES



BRIDGE OF DOOM Is it a treehouse? Maybe there'll be Ewoks?



RED SHIELD APPEAL Like a red rag to a sabre-toothed snow tiger.

VERDICT

PSW

UPPERS

- Incredibly addictive
- Great sub-quests
- Engaging combat
- Extensive narrative

DOWNERS

- Unoriginal
- Looks a bit bland
- A tad heavy on the mythology
- Can be repetitive

GRAPHICS - The visuals tend to look dated and uninspired

7

SOUND - An excellent score with impressive voice acting

8

LIFESPAN - Lengthy main quest and sub-quests galore

8

OVERALL SCORE

Very much like the original in every respect, *Summoner 2* is a fabulously addictive – if unoriginal – RPG experience that everybody should try. Fans of the first will absolutely love it.

8



BURNOUT 2: POINT OF IMPACT



ALL THIS SEQUEL NEEDED TO BE WAS BETTER TO AN ALMOST DEVASTATING DEGREE, IN EVERY SINGLE WAY. IT IS.

TYPE	RACING
PLAYERS	1-4
OUT	NOW
DISTRIBUTOR	ACCLAIM
PRICE	\$99.95
DEVELOPER	CRITERION
RATED	G

SEE IT ON DVD

- / Awesome mid-air collisions
- / Reach insane speeds
- / Over 12 hours of racing
- / Even better than *B1*

SPEED: YOU'VE NEVER SEEN

anything like it. With the possible exceptions of future-craft racers *WipeOut* and *Extreme G3*, no game

has come close to giving you a machine capable of such velocity. And those titles may well have run fast, but there was little sense of danger, no feeling you were pushing the edge of disaster with every turn or crest. The biggest fear was scraping a barrier and slowing down a bit. Here, when you make a mistake, you don't slow down a bit. You slow down a lot. In a shower of little pieces.

Burnout 2: Point of Impact is never less than impressive technically and, even better, never less than beautiful while it does it. What's more, for perhaps 99 percent of the time it's also screamingly good fun, and we've even found a way around the one percent that it's not. More about that later. So! From all this, you might think we're talking about an almost perfect game. And we almost are, as *Burnout 2's* as close to a perfect arcade racer as you're ever likely to play. The first

game was attractive and enjoyable, if brief and, while the sequel's ethos obviously remains the same – race three other cars through heavy traffic – much has changed. This is not just the same game wearing fake tan and shoulder pads. It's bigger, faster, smoother, more dramatic and more exciting by orders of magnitude.

BIGGER AND BETTER

In fact, it's way bigger. The first game had little to unlock and could easily be completed in a day, but here there's 10-12 hours of racing before you even get to the Custom Car Championship – those tuned up Max Power-ish versions of the standard road cars. And they're definitely worth getting to, despite the amount of unlockable, 'secret' cars to find almost from the off. We were worried at first that, having won the super-fast Oval Racer and used it to cane the later stages of the first championship, a tuned Focus-alike car with a ridiculous paint job wouldn't really cut it. We were wrong. On two counts. Firstly, even with the extra

speed of the bonus car, we hadn't really smashed our competitors to the degree you might expect. There might only be three of them, but they always give you a damn good run – and if you're running away with it, they realise and noticeably speed up by the end of the series. There's no simple way to win all the races with your chequebook here, as you can so easily do in *Gran Turismo*. We're bloody glad to see it.



TRUCK OFF All standard cars have a tuned version. Even this.



I AM THE LAW 'Highly trained officers bring the chase to a halt.' Translation: 'Kill him, Cooter, kill him!'



PRINCE NAS-CAR The US oval racer – super fast, but a bit of a nail when it comes to the turns. Ha!

/ THERE'S NO WAY TO WIN RACES WITH YOUR CHEQUE BOOK HERE. WE'RE BLOODY GLAD TO SEE IT /

Secondly, while top speeds may nominally be the same for several cars, *Burnout 2*'s dynamics are subtle enough that how you get there makes a palpable difference. Step from the Oval Racer (Nascar) to the Custom Compact and you'll find a whole lot more work on your plate – the little hatch is flighty, quick to boost and extremely nervous over crests in comparison to the long and heavy racer. Just what you'd expect in real life, in fact, as Nascars are powerful but almost agricultural in comparison to other cars. For a game to provide such deep and detailed handling models while still remaining within the 'arcade' sphere is deeply impressive. What it means is that anybody can drive any car and have fun, but petrolheads can thrash them silly and never want for a challenge. And it's when you dig into this game that its true quality shows – as we said, this is no veneer of freshness laid over an old game, a retread. This is like V8 power after years of 1000cc Metros.

Once again though, none of these are real vehicles you'll see on the road – at least not quite – which may put some of you off, if you're strange like that. However, the sure-to-be-entirely-coincidental-for-legal-purposes likenesses are



R.I.P. Metal carnage but no bodies, family-types. Simmer down.



WALKING IN THE AIR Finally accepting the death of his career, Aled Jones closes his eyes, punches the throttle and utters a single sob.



SLIPPERY PIG The cop car's top speed makes it a worthwhile bonus – and its weight makes for some impressive pile ups.

strong enough to fool the eye into believing otherwise. For instance, the US Muscle car looks for all the world like a TVR from behind. And this is despite its Americanisation since the first game, as the European stages have been left behind and the racing's purely Stateside. From the front and side there's more than a hint of Dodge Viper, it's true, but the whole thing works. The bonus cars obviously have a particularly American flavour as well, so among them there's a 50s hotrod, a monstrous be-winged lowrider and a classic Deussen-type thing, all flared mudguards and chrome downpipes emerging from a bonnet built



LANES, TRAINS AND AUTOMOBILES Hit everything! Crash! Crash!

like a cathedral. Many are much slower and harder to control than the more modern cars, so their usefulness is somewhat open to question. Will you use them? We doubt it. Their moon-like weight is useful in the new Crash mode, however.

POOPY DAISY

So, not only is the racing more exciting now, but the results when you get it all wrong are *far* more intense. After the first few minutes, accidents in the first game were pretty disappointing, but that's not a criticism that could be levelled here. Skip over a rise into a dawdling van and the impact is colossal enough to flick an engrossed player's hands to his face, much in the manner of the screaming victims in all those old American films. Why didn't they ever try to steer out of the way? It's amazing there are any actors left. Anyway, there's no lengthy dwelling on stupid little fender benders either – it's only the real humdingers that get the full, multi-angle treatment. And if your pile up causes other accidents, the game even cuts to show those. Frankly, this is hilarious.

It's no longer possible to save your crashes or watch each one at the end of a race, it's true, but they're just so much bigger now you can simply >



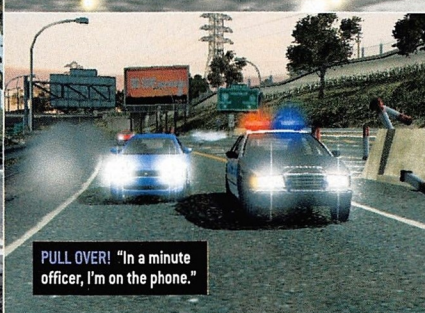
AIR RAGE The wings fell off our car in sympathy.



IN THIS SEASON Just about the right height for a hat.



THAT'S GOTTA HURT Impacts look and feel seriously energetic.



PULL OVER! "In a minute officer, I'm on the phone."



SHINY RED CAR Redesigned, but still more than a bit Elise-ish, no?

go and have another one instead. The accident fetish side of things is now taken care of in the aforementioned *Crash* mode, where racing ceases to matter and you... well, *you* know. *Crash*. There are 15 stages, busy junctions and long tailbacks, and you simply cause as much dollar-damage as possible. Full slo-mo cuts in as soon as the airbags deploy, but if we're talking niggles, the ability to switch cameras manually would have been nice... as would a few wilder variations. We love the way you can hit other cars and launch through junctions, fly, disintegrate: wouldn't it be beautiful to explode from one raised carriageway to another, say, causing mass pile ups in both lanes? Or pile off a building into traffic? Or bounce up a cliff to another road and smack those bitches up there... It'd probably only take you a few minutes to programme, Criterion. Maybe for *Burnout 3: 47 Points of Impact* then, eh? Oh, how rude.

ACCIDENTS IN THE HOME

It's not just that the cars go further and clearly have more weight and momentum than before. They come apart too. Bonnets, boots, bumpers, front and rear wings all fly off on their own rising trajectories, graffiti-ing smoke through the sky like



FREQUENT FLYER This car's stats are maxed out – drive safe, y'all!

the Challenger disaster. Chassis twist. Sparks splash from grinding metalwork with every impact, and it's not unusual to be slowly overtaken by your own wheels as the wreck slumps and all else comes to stop. And even with all this going on, the frame rate is absolutely unbending – it's as smooth as Connery's Bond and twice as fast. Totally impressive.

When not burrowing into death, the cars make even more of their furious speed by being far more dynamic than before. Not only do you spend a good deal of time sideways, but now you spend quite a bit in the air too: often you'll be doing both at once. Boosting over the tracks' many crests massively increases the distance you fly, and it's just one of the records displayed at the end of races (the most burnouts in a row and the fewest crashes are the most obviously interesting). Competing for the highest score is okay, but you're far more likely just to want to master certain sections, such as the series of short, violent leaps on the Run To The Sun course. It's not totally straight and the rises hide where the road goes next... and any traffic that's on it. Boosting along here leaves you on the very edge of control, leaping and sliding at the most ridiculous speeds and, of course, drifts and big air earn you even more boost. Even when you know them, sections like these remain a test. It's brilliant fun. And that's the way we like it, baby.

CHAIN SMOKING

Something many people simply didn't realise in the first game was that you could 'chain' Burnouts together. You can here too, and it's far more obvious. Driving dangerously enough as you boost earns another bar-full of go-juice, and you'll see a 'Burnout X 1' message flash up. Keep R1 pressed down at all costs, keep driving like a loon and you

vastly cut your lap time while entering some kind of terrifying, Zen state of unblinking anxiety. The best way is to stay on the wrong side of the road and terrify the oncoming traffic, but a bundle of big jumps or a few enormous slides will do the trick too. It's important to realise that you can let go of the throttle and use the brake while performing a Burnout – just so long as you never release R1. The brake's not so much for slowing you down as getting you sideways, and the extra control is vital.

Boost is easier to earn, rising, for instance, whenever you stay in the oncoming lane, regardless of whether there's any traffic there. You also lose far less after a crash. The truly insane performance of these cars is thus far more accessible than before. However, this brings us on to our only real problem with the game. We've found that, in some circumstances, it's actually easier to win races without using the boost at all. Your opponents pace you pretty well, which thankfully means there are no *GT3*-like processions to be endured. But by and large, if you boost, they boost, so if you get out in front and never use it they've got no way of catching you. As long as you don't crash, that is. And if you're not worried about building up the Burnout bar, you don't need to take risks anyway, so you're less likely to. It's a good way of ensuring you come first – which will shortly lead us to our other niggle – but it's obviously a rather boring method and missing the point. So why would you do it? Well, intelligently, the races aren't all just laps of circuits. It's a mix. So some are mini championships over a selection of normal tracks, some are point-to-point dashes, some are pursuits and some are Face Offs.

To unlock the best new vehicles you must first open the Face Offs, and this means getting all golds in the preceding championship. The problem is, that's all gold *in a row*. No mistakes. That's a tall



/ ENTER
INTO SOME
KIND OF
TERRIFYING
ZEN STATE
OF WIDE-
EYED
ANXIETY /

OOOH, CHASE ME

WHAT WOULD AMERICA BE WITHOUT COP CARS? OH, THE LAND OF THE FREE, THAT'S IT.

NEW FOR THIS SECOND ITERATION IS THE ICONIC Crown Victoria pig-mobile, a fast but heavy law-icle complete with flashing lights and sirens. But it's not just a bonus car – it has its own mode. You'll find Pursuit challenges all through the championships, but equally you can just go straight to Pursuit from the main menu and select an opponent. Then all you need to do is ram it a requisite number of times within the allowed mileage, destroying it piece by piece – as indicated by the dotted bar top left of the screen – perhaps by twisting it viciously into oncoming traffic 'in order to guarantee the safety of innocent motorists,' or just pushing it into the path of a truck. Watch it smoke and burn! The only slight disappointment is that these lawbreakers only ever lose one dot of the bar no matter how hard you crash them. It would have been good to take out half their health with one superb stack. Still, Pursuit is a great way to break things up and hilarious fun in its own right.



only became available after any given championship had been completed once – because with races that need a little luck to win as well as skill, there's bound to be frustration otherwise.

But this is the one percent of annoyance to be found in the 99 percent pleasure. Give this game a while – long enough to realise just how fast you can go with a hot car, a fistful of boost and gasping traffic risks – and you'll see speed like nowhere else. *GT3* might have authenticity, but it's slow and dull in comparison. *Burnout 2* is the fastest, smoothest and most entertaining arcade racer yet, and manages to encompass a challenge for petrolheads at the same time as catering for one-off thrill seekers. The cars look great, the handling's gorgeous, the speed's insane and the crashes are bigger than the resurrection of Elvis in his broadest white jumpsuit. No, it's not flawless, nothing is. But as entertainment, it's a masterpiece.

/ STEVEN WILLIAMS

order, and getting to the final lap of the final race only to stack into the side of junction-crossing bus is pretty annoying.

I CAN FIT THROUGH THERE

There is a way around it, and that's to reset before the autosave kicks in and load up again. This obviously creates a rather staccato pace (it takes a minute and a half to load), but it's better than restarting the whole championship. To be fair, it's only likely to affect decent drivers at the very end

of the game – and we'd rather have a challenge than not. Thankfully, you only need win each championship (rather than every race in it) to open the next series, so you don't get stuck, you just can't win the bonus Face Off car – others are awarded anyway. By the later stages of the tough Custom Car Championship we found it preferable to ignore the Face Offs and just enjoy playing through as normal, then come back and work at opening the face offs. Really there should be a 'restart race' option to avoid the hassle of reloading – even if it

NOISE POLLUTION



REAMED OUT TAILPIPE So the owner can gas himself, perhaps.

POWER IS NOTHING WITHOUT NOISE – AND THE ROUGH EDGED HOWLS OF THESE CARS WORKS.

CRITERION SPENT AGES RECORDING ALL sorts of outrageous exhaust sounds for this, and it's paid off. The cars sound entertainingly aggressive, and the fast and furious (if you know what we mean) switching sound of the boost coming in works a treat.

What's more, the now far heavier and more up-tempo music comes up in the mix as you hit the nitrous, rather than fading out as it did before. We liked the narrowing-focus effect of that in the first game – the sense that your speed was so great all other

input faded from consciousness – but must admit this works better. And not only does the specifically-composed music's volume rise, but the passion with which the instruments are played increases – you couldn't do that with licensed tracks, no matter how popular they were. Every area of this game works for its keep, and the sound and music is no different. On the other hand, being so incredibly positive about anything is giving us the creeps, so rest assured that one of the songs really sucks or something.

VERDICT

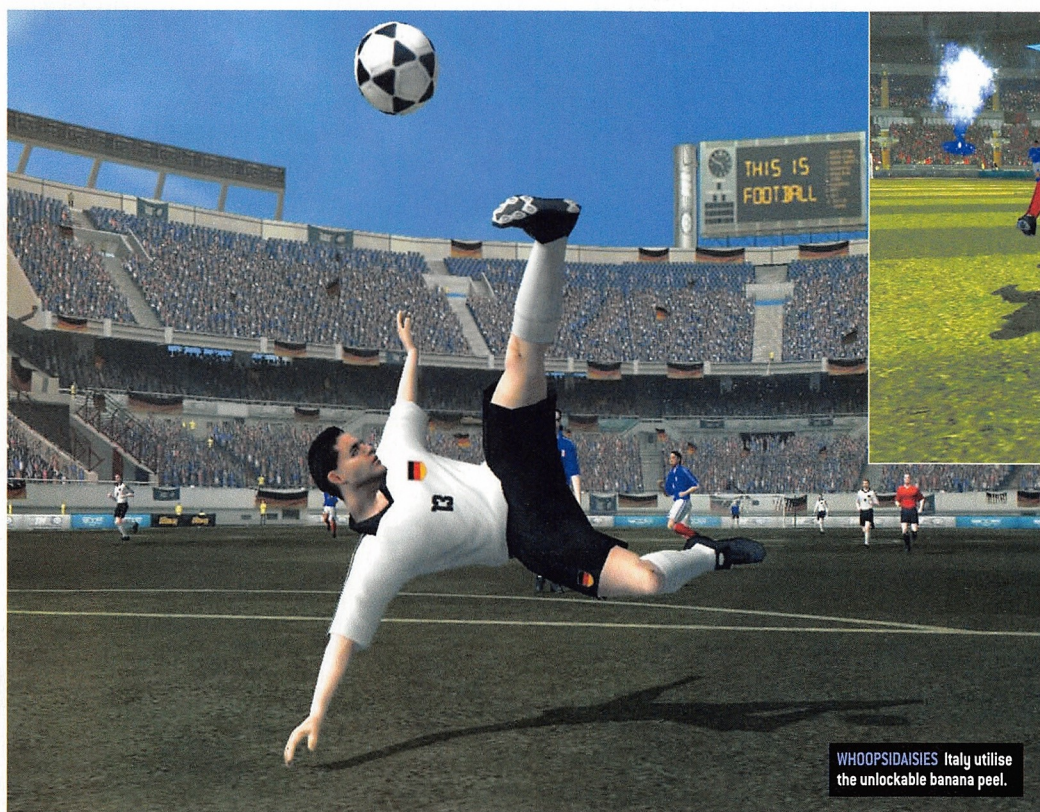
PSW

UPPERS	DOWNERS
- Incredibly fast	- Frustrating at the end
- Great engines and music	- Often murderous traffic
- Beautiful looking	- All golds requires patience...
- Superb crashes	- ...and luck.
GRAPHICS - Sumptuous, astonishingly fast and smooth	10
SOUND - Raucous and very effective	9
LIFESPAN - There's always a more risky manoeuvre	9

OVERALL SCORE

B2 improves upon its predecessor in every way. More cars, more speed, bigger crashes, better looks, more game... simply a superb arcade racer. Buy it. Now.

10



WHOOPSIDAISES! Italy utilise the unlockable banana peel.



AYE EYE Don't mind me, I'm just chillin'.

THIS IS SOCCER 2003

SO NAMED TO AVOID ANY CONFUSION OVER THE CHRONOLOGY. YOU MIGHT THINK IT PORTRAYED WEST HAM'S FABULOUS FA CUP TRIUMPH IN 1980, FOR INSTANCE.

TYPE	SPORTS
PLAYERS	1-8
OUT	NOW
DISTRIBUTOR	SONY
PRICE	\$99.95
DEVELOPER	TEAM SOHO
RATED	G

SURE, IT MIGHT CLAIM IT'S SOCCER, but the *This Is Soccer* series has never really established itself among the top videogame representations of the beautiful game. *FIFA*, despite mixed reviews, remains the yardstick by which all soccer titles are judged. Yet in the last couple of years, *Pro Evolution Soccer* has arguably knocked it off its perch. In this strange new virtual footballing world, it perhaps the perfect time for a new force to strike – cue *This Is Soccer 2003*.

Being the only major soccer title to be developed in a traditional soccer-playing nation, you would think that the *TIS* series might offer a more authentic footballing experience, and indeed in some aspects it does. It certainly contains a vast array of teams – some 650. There's also a mass of correctly titled players – around 13,000 in total – many of which feature rather impressive player likenesses. Slightly less impressive are the dozen or so stadiums, which are nonetheless faithful to their real-life counterparts. Yet these simple figures alone don't fully reveal the true authenticity of the game. At first, it might be hard to recognise, but in the little touches, Team Soho has gone some way to providing a genuine footballing experience.

On the pitch, refs shuffle about (albeit very, and perhaps fittingly, clumsily) while linesmen flag a free kick. Players raise their arm nicely asking for an offside, and stagger when a shot hits them. Meanwhile, the figures will jostle with each other at bookings convincingly, and meander off the field at

halftime, realistically moving and interacting. Touches like these, football fans can only watch and admire.

CLEAR AS MUD

Because they certainly won't be applauding. Charming features aside, the graphics are not far above mediocre. Pitch textures can get horribly ugly, especially on a rainy day – which are themselves only very basically represented by a darker image and the old vertical white rain stripes animation. Although player animation is mostly good, it is somewhat jerky in transitions, and hard to appreciate in the normal camera views. Replays and scripted bookings display the tasty detail on players, and an overall crispness to the models, but are let down by the crowd in the background, which gets hideously blurred at the closer distance. Yet the crowd does work quite well for the most part, as although each person is two-dimensional and repetitive, their standing animations for dramatic incidents prevent from

becoming too static.

Similarly, the sound is hardly worth shouting about. Crowd noise changes in volume that is fairly appropriate to the action on the pitch, but lacks a degree of precision and relevance to each individual match in that specific chants aren't up to the standard of *Pro Evolution Soccer*. The lone commentator is fairly standard, but thankfully isn't too annoying. However, he only has two tones – orgasmic excitement or mild disinterest – creating some startling mood swings. Perhaps tellingly, the best element of the game's sound occurs in the first season of the career mode, where your school team is playing in front of nobody on the local pitch. All you can hear is the odd shout telling you to shoot, and the thud of boot hitting shin. Ah, it takes you back.

Yes, you heard right, *This is Soccer 2003* features a delectably quaint career mode. Initially starting out with a team of nobodies in the local schools' division, success will earn you promotion



THIS IS AGILITY We didn't know David Seaman got a haircut.



THIS IS STRETCHING Don't pull a hammy.

STYLE CHANGE

IF YOU BUILD IT, THEY WILL FALL

A feature that has become increasingly common in Sony-published games in the last year is a special online mode. Although not actual online play, these kind of features provide a degree of online functionality, and actually manage to create an artificial sense of competition. In *TIS2003*'s case, the game offers a Challenge Mode, where, following a special match, you are awarded with a score, based on your 'quality of play', as well as a code that you upload to a special website. There they'll have a set of rankings to judge who exactly is the most stylish player around. Bellissimo!



SHHHHH Be vewwy vewwy quiet. I'm huntin' Soccerroos...



FLY AWAY! The recent diving trend is eating into gate receipts.



THIS IS CHAOS Coach said keep your eyes on the ball, fools!



WISE LEBOUF He just knows Kewell's going to miss.



/ ALL YOU CAN HEAR IS THE ODD SHOUT TELLING YOU TO SHOOT /

eventually to the fully professional, elite European level. Team Soho has even created appropriate pitches, such as the school field and the semi-pro suburban ground, on which your boys can create their own legends. This is perhaps where the authentic soccer flavour is strongest. Seeing Mount Noo and Horsenden line up inside some typical school changing rooms, complete with jackets hanging up next to a bank of lockers, before wandering out on the pitch before the match epitomises the spirit of the career mode, and the game. This is soccer at its absolute purest.

CURVACEOUS

Into the game now and you'll be glad to hear that *This is Soccer 2003* plays quite nicely. It's certainly no *Pro Evolution Soccer*, as there are a few aspects of the game that are either bewildering or disappointing. These include the ridiculous amounts of curve from free kicks, a basic and inflexible heading system and a lack of penetration in the off-the-ball runs of your AI-controlled players. However, the game does create a style of play that retains many of the principles of real football, with the ability to turn or shoot dependent on the body position of your players, while the wide areas of the pitch are the easiest for gaining ground. Tackling and skill-moves are also done very well, thanks to some solid ball physics. The major gripe with the game is that it can get a little

tedious. There's just not enough variety in running speed, and defenders seem to have an edge when it comes to turning and closing people down. It just makes it all a bit dreary – saved only by the perhaps overly dramatic zooms on a player who has just missed a goal, or a linesman flagging.

So what we're left with is a fair soccer game that is a small pleasure to play. Unfortunately, it doesn't look as good as *FIFA*, while *Pro Evo*'s gameplay betters *TIS* for a serious simulation. Nonetheless, it is easy to pick up and play, and for the football-loving casual gamer *This is Soccer 2003* could be for you.

/ JACKSON GOTHE-SNAPE

VERDICT

PSW

UPPERS

- Range of teams
- Skill-move execution
- Charming career mode
- Novel online competition

DOWNERS

- Pixelated, repetitive crowds
- Monotonous pace
- Limited tactical modifications
- Disappointing AI

GRAPHICS - Fairly run of the mill, with at times basic textures.

6

SOUND - Standard commentator and crowd, and little else.

7

LIFESPAN - Aided by an online challenge and career modes

8

OVERALL SCORE

TIS2003 shimmies around one defender, nutmegs another, but leaves its finish in the dishwasher as a muffed shot ends up in row Z. A nice bit of play, but no goal.

7



PORSCHE CHALLENGE Can you keep it in one piece?

SHOX

EXTREME SPORTS RALLYING. IT'S LIKE SSX TRICKY - BUT WITH CARS!



TYPE	RACING
PLAYERS	1-4
OUT	NOW
DISTRIBUTOR	EA
PRICE	\$99.95
DEVELOPER	EA SPORTS BIG
RATED	G
SEE IT ON DVD	
/ Incredible playability / Let rip on the road / Lacks complexity / Burnout's poor relation	

THE COMMONWEALTH GAMES MAY

be just a fading memory, but the quest for gold, silver and bronze lives on in our hearts. Whether it's taking part in a one-sided swimming meet between Thorpie and, well... the rest of the Commonwealth or grabbing the honours in *Gran Turismo*'s license tests, the hunt for gold is a timeless goal and, appropriately enough, the basis for all the action in EA Sport's latest racer, *Shox*. Jumping behind the wheel of one of 24 licensed, high-powered cars, the aim is simply to pound it round a number of pleasantly designed tracks while racing five other computerised cars in a chase to collect as many special gold 'shox' awards as possible.

Sounds familiar? Well that's because in terms of originality *Shox* is nothing more than a by-the-numbers driving game dressed up in some admittedly tasty visuals. What it does have in spades however is an annoyingly high level of

instant playability and the slick sort of presentation that screams out to you to 'come and have a go if you think you're hard enough'. Like the bleached blonde bombshells you find staggering out of the Off Broadway on a Saturday night, subtle *Shox* is not, but it's definitely worth a fiddle.

WELCOME TO SHOXTON

The standard game is predictable enough: compete in each of the division's six races (of which there are four divisions) in an attempt to earn enough wins and money to bag yourself some new motors and the right to move up into the next division of racing. Got it? Well now get ready for the science. Each race contains three short sequences of track known as 'Shox Zones'. Once you enter one of these areas a counter starts, moving from gold to silver to bronze, with the trick being to complete each one before the counter moves away from gold. Get gold in all three of them and you'll be rewarded with a night version of the track as well as activating the 'Shoxzone' — a kind of moving *Star Trek*-style warp field that can be chased round the track and driven through for big cash prizes.

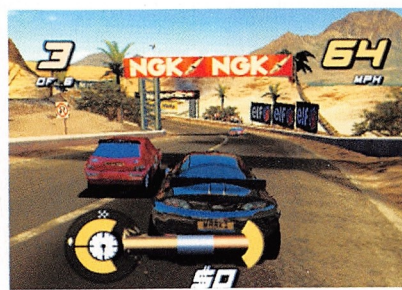
And that's about it — *Shox* never really gets any more complicated than that. Okay, so you have the ability to gamble any money you earn in a one-on-

one race against the computer to win new cars, but these race sections are so short that they add very little to the game in terms of complexity. There are also a number of car-specific challenges, requiring you to earn the gold awards with particular motors, but we're hardly talking about *Gran Turismo*'s speciality championships here. *Shox* just doesn't reach that level. The game isn't about highbrow racing see: it's about putting pedal to the metal and letting rip on the open road.

The cars themselves are the immediately recognisable line up of four-wheeled usual suspects — Subaru, Lancia, Ford and Toyota are just some of the predictably licensed names — plus there's the obligatory Union Jack-emblazoned Mini. It's a bit more *Sega Rally* than *V-Rally* in terms of handling however, consisting of plenty of arcade style wheel-spin and drift turns. It's a bit heavy and unrefined in places, with the faster cars often turning out to be tricky little buggers to control, but it all seems strangely satisfying and perfectly fits the mood of the game. Likewise the courses — each based on one of three different environments; arctic, jungle and desert — are the usual mixed bag of razor sharp hairpins and sloping bends, but they're all bright and beautiful to look at and generally whip along at a very acceptable pace.



MUCKY PUPS As you race your car visibly picks up dirt and mud from the road.



IN THE ZONE Complete the Shox Zone before the gold bar goes.



YEAH BABY! Austen Powers lays down some skidmarks in a Mini.

SLO-MO!

One of the main features of *Shox* is its *Matrix*-inspired slow motion sequences. Hit a jump or crash into another car at high speed and the camera swoops out, round the car and back to its original position, a bit like it would if Keanu Reeves was behind the wheel. Luckily the effect only happens once or twice a race, just enough to not be really irritating.

IN ACCORDANCE WITH INTERNATIONAL VIDEOGAME LAW, IT'S THE OBLIGATORY ROTATE-O-SCOPE MODE.



WOOSH! Hit the bump and the car takes flight – how majestic.



FULL BEAM. The camera spins round for a quick look at the front.



HOW MUCH LONGER? We've not even seen the back of the car yet.



So why is it that *Shox* comes across as nothing more than a bit of candy-floss gaming, ideal for a quick knee-trembler but hardly material for a long term relationship?

Perhaps it's the painfully noticeable lack of depth. Compared to the recent crop of PS2 driving games, *Shox* just can't compete with regards to long-term appeal and complexity. Once you've cleared the single-player game there's very little to keep you coming back for more. Sure there's the challenge of getting all the cars and the gold awards, plus the entertaining four-player split-screen mode is certainly an amusing diversion for those of you lucky enough to have friends, but *Shox* isn't likely to stay prominent in your software collection for very long.

There's also an alarming inconsistency to the learning curve, with some early courses being unreasonably difficult while later courses seemingly way too easy. It's not helped by the fact that your rival racers suffer from that annoying group mentality where all the computer-controlled cars constantly drive round bunched together. Pass one and you'll pass them all – lose a place though and you'll likely to see every pair of

taillights in the game. Yes, we're perfectly aware that gaming gems such as *Burnout* and even *Gran Turismo 3* suffer from the same fault to varying degrees but it's frustratingly apparent in *Shox*. When are software developers going to learn that cars don't race like that?

THE FAST OR THE FURIOUS

But perhaps the main problem is that *Shox* really can't decide what it wants to be. It's too flippant to be a serious rally game, but it can't seem to go all the way over into the perfect chaos that is *Burnout*, instead preferring to sit nervously on the fence, passing itself off as a light-hearted piece of arcade fun albeit with basic money and garage management to boot.

It's a bit unfair to judge *Shox* solely on these issues though – it's a fun game at heart and

/ THE MAIN PROBLEM IS THAT SHOX CAN'T DECIDE WHAT IT WANTS TO BE /



ALL FOUR ONE The multiplayer option is fun.



SILVER SNOW SURFER It's just like Christmas with all those lights.

definitely worth a spin. Like the other titles in the EA Big range, such as *SSX Tricky* and *FreeStyle*, the presentation is superbly over-the-top with the focus clearly centred on instant playability. The *Shox Zones* are a novel idea and the *Matrix*-style slo-mo effects that occur when you jump are (we begrudgingly admit) fairly impressive.

So if you're in the market for a novelty racer that offers non-stop action with a minimum of irritating complications then *Shox* is ideal; it's just a pity that the novelty has to wear off so quickly.

/ MARK ROBINS



ALL-NIGHTER The night time courses require bright headlights.



GENTLEMEN, START YOUR ENGINES The AI cars bunch together from the start to the end of the race.

VERDICT		PSW
UPPERS	DOWNERS	
- Colourful tracks and cars	- Cars suffer from poor AI	
- Handling feels about right	- 'Shox Zone' novelty wears off	
- Amusing multiplayer mode	- One-on-one racing too short	
- Cool slow-mo effects	- Unbalanced difficulty levels	
GRAPHICS	- Looks the absolute business	8
SOUND	- The over-excitable voiceovers add colour	8
LIFESPAN	- A reasonable challenge to keep you going	7
OVERALL SCORE		7
Entertaining to begin with but soon shows a distinct lack of depth. Best described as the Pamela Anderson of racers: big, bouncy, and fun, but you wouldn't want to commit to it.		



HIDEY HOLE Crates neither contain ammo nor stop bullets.



BARREL OF LAUGHS The first casualty of war is inevitably a crate.



DESERT TACTICS Soldier, get down low and go, go, go!

CONFLICT: DESERT STORM

THE FIRST VIRTUAL WAR IS NOW RECREATED. VIRTUALLY.

TYPE	SHOOTER
PLAYERS	1-4
OUT	NOW
DISTRIBUTOR	INFOGRADES
PRICE	\$99.95
DEVELOPER	PIVOTAL
RATED	M 15+

GIVEN THE CURRENT HEATED DEBATE over the Iraq question, Infogrames couldn't have chosen a better moment to release a tactical shooter that recreates the endeavours of US and British special forces during the Gulf War. Perhaps Dubya got his hands on a preview version and enjoyed it so much he thought he may as well have a go at those towel heads in real life. Or perhaps not.

Taking its cue from perennial PC titles such as *Ghost Recon* (which, coincidentally, is coming to PS2 in December), *Conflict: Desert Storm* puts you

in control of an elite squad of four marines, each armed to the teeth and just itching to show those Arabs the power of democracy. In an effort to ease you into the swing of the tactical aspects of squad management, the first mission is a solo jaunt. Here you learn the intricacies of crawling along on your belly to avoid being sighted by the enemy and the necessity of stealth over frontal assaults. Later you'll be joined by three fellow marines whom you can order about or even possess their bodies for direct control.

The opening tutorial – barked by a loud-mouthed Yank drill sergeant whom we'd be happy to see die slowly and painfully – teaches the finer points of issuing commands to your troops. Pay close attention here or you'll be lost out in the field. It's a complex system requiring the memorisation of a bunch of button combinations and esoteric icons with little in the way of on-screen prompts or indeed any sort of command map. Confused? So were we. Fortunately the slow pace (it's all about tactics, after all) alleviates some of the problems caused by such an anti-intuitive interface, but you'll still end up ordering your chums to their doom or trying to shoot the enemy with a medikit.

Such troubles are further diminished by the excellent co-operative mode, wherein you and a friend each assume control of two soldiers. Not only does this overcome many of the AI's inevitable deficiencies (unless either you or your friend are really, really thick), but the fact you can talk to each other and only need to worry about two guys (instead of all four)

means your squad can easily be split up in order to effect numerous tactical manoeuvres. When played this way, *Conflict* really comes into its own and begins to provide the kind of "thinking man's shooter" we had been hoping for all along.

Still, no amount of co-op pleasure can surmount the several niggling flaws elsewhere. The poor graphics, especially the excessive sniper-spoiling fogging and plodding framerate, and samey mission objectives and environments certainly detract from the immersion factor.

This is a solid game, albeit only genuinely playable with the aid of a friend, and presently the only one of its kind on PS2.

/ DAVID WILDGOOSE

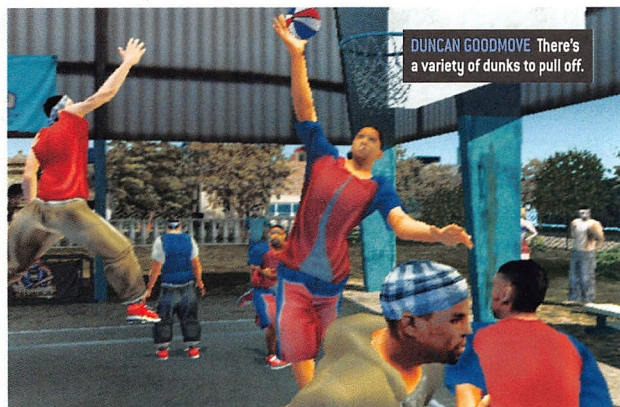


BLACK HAWK DOWN Foley is one of the marine's default name. Mikey was excited for a moment, though.

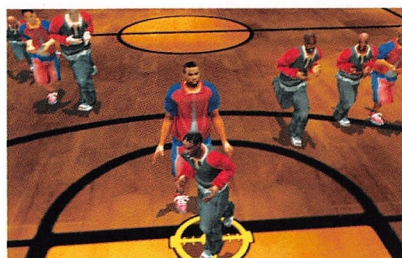
VERDICT		PSW
UPPERS	DOWNERS	
- Tactical nous required	- Fiddly controls	
- Co-op play is excellent	- Dull environments	
- Very timely subject matter	- Framerate issues	
- Best of its kind	- Limited draw distance	
GRAPHICS	- Comes up short in every department	5
SOUND	- Weapon effects are well done	6
LIFESPAN	- Lengthy campaign, plus co-op play	7
OVERALL SCORE		
Nothing too spectacular, but far from dismal, there's just enough here to warrant your consideration if tactical action appeals. Add a point if you can play co-op.		6



WE DRESSED THEM! That's why they all look so good.



DUNCAN GOODMOVE There's a variety of dunks to pull off.



ON TARGET Kids, can you spot what's missing from this picture?



IT'S MINE! A dropped quarter sent them scurrying.



HIT THE DECK A daft idea, given the solid wood flooring.

STREET HOOPS

MOVING OUT OF THE PROFESSIONAL ARENA AND BACK TO ITS ROOTS, BASKETBALL GETS A LICK OF STREET CRED.

TYPE	SPORTS
PLAYERS	1-4
OUT	NOW
DISTRIBUTOR	ACTIVISION
PRICE	\$99.95
DEVELOPER	ACTIVISION
RATED	G8+
SEE IT ON DVD	
/ Spectacular slams / Dynamic dunks / Various street locations / Watch the b-boys in action	

THE AMERICAN'S DESIRE FOR instant gratification is both ably demonstrated and bizarrely disproved by the two major sports in the country. Whereas basketball easily satisfies the hunger for constant action thrust down the throat like a fried Spam sandwich, American football offers a quick fix on a par with Kevin Costner's 13 hour epic *Dances With Wolves*. Thankfully, *Street Hoops* chooses basketball as its focus, which is lucky as (a) there are no inane moves called draw flicks, and (b) it would be a rather irrelevant name for a gridiron game.

Taking the action away from the usual stadia and back onto the streets (where the game, y'know, began), *Street Hoops* traverses the world, taking in a variety of urban locations, including New York, Philadelphia and even the home of the sport... Queen's Park in London. Why *White Men Can't Jump* was never shot there we don't know...

The single-player game encompasses two Career modes and the option to play full and half-

court games with between one and five players on each side. The Career modes are standard fare – win more matches to unlock new courts and earn extra dollars, which can be gambled if you're confident and fancy a flutter. Your team of hoopstars can also be kitted out at various stores in a number of US clothing lines. Thankfully, clashing looks receive scathing comments from the urban equivalent of a daytime makeover show, so even the most uncoordinated dressers should have no problems generating respect out on the various courts.

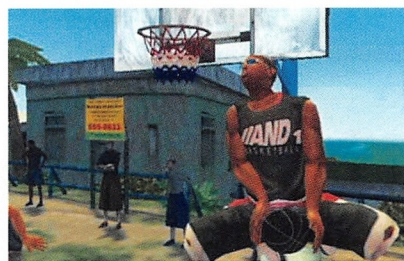
The action is fast and frantic, and it's all presented extremely stylishly. Those who like a high scoring game will be very much at home here. Continued playing also rewards you with an understanding of both the game and the sport, and you'll soon be making behind-the-back passes that rip apart the opponent's defence. In fact, the game is rather excellent fun when you have the ball, and it's endlessly satisfying to perform alley-oops and cross-court passing moves. Unfortunately, it all falls apart when you're defending, and any gratification earned from your offensive stylings is quickly eradicated by the frustration of not being able to get the ball back. This works both ways, with the computer equally inept at stripping you of possession, meaning that games tend to lead to basket after basket, with only missed shots punctuating the action and separating the teams.

Visually, the game is workmanlike, with smooth, basic player animations and plain looking locations. The multi-camera replays of spectacular

dunks add a little to the action, although they come so frequently that they soon lose their novelty. The music and sound is better, with a suitably dirty selection of hip-hop, courtesy of labels such as Rawkus (the home of Mos Def and Talib Kweli), and a nice mix of background banter about your mad skillz, or lack of them. It would be a slight exaggeration to say that you can almost imagine yourself sitting on the benches at Venice Beach as the hustlers hustle and the ladies swoon (so we won't say that), but it's fairly atmospheric nonetheless.

So is it enough to wean cricket and rugby loving public onto a healthy diet of b-ball and street hustling? Probably not, but those chasing a quick fix of end-to-end sporting action could do far worse.

/ SIMON SINGLETON



COURT IN THE ACT Basketball is the perfect sport for show-offs.

VERDICT		PSW
UPPERS	DOWNERS	
- Action is rapid and effective	- Defending is too difficult	
- Satisfying trick moves	- Strips can look similar	
- Gambling is fun	- Tedious when you're behind	
- Nice variety of court types	- Replays become repetitive	
GRAPHICS	- Nothing spectacular, but they do the job	6
SOUND	- Decent music, and some amusing banter	8
LIFESPAN	- Career mode sustains the single-player mode	6
OVERALL SCORE		6
Taking basketball onto the streets isn't a novel videogames concept, but it never fails to entertain. <i>Street Hoops</i> doesn't offer anything new, but it's still enjoyable Yankified gaming.		

MADDEN NFL 2003



DOES WEARING ALL THAT PADDING MAKE THEM WIMPIER THAN OUR RUGBY PLAYERS OR JUST SMARTER?

TYPE	SPORTS
PLAYERS	1-4
OUT	NOW
DISTRIBUTOR	EA
PRICE	\$99.95
DEVELOPER	EA SPORTS
RATED	G

TO THE UNINITIATED, AMERICAN

football is just a bunch of blokes pounding into each other in a desperate attempt to prevent the other side from gaining a few centimetres. You pick a play, chuck the ball, hope that the bloke catches it, and then do it all over again. After a considerable amount of time weighing up your options of course. And that's where *Madden NFL 2003* excels.

The stop-start nature and simplistic action is never as thrilling as *PES* or *NHL*, but it does the on-

field action bit superbly, with the most stunning sporting visuals yet witnessed on PS2. Only by coupling these core facets with an incredible level of depth does *Madden NFL 2003* attain impressive levels of greatness.

Your control over every aspect of the sport is astonishingly comprehensive. The Create-a-playbook feature lets you concoct your very own moves, and then test them out instantaneously to see if your tactical masterplan works. The Franchise mode gives you control over every aspect of the game over 30 consecutive years. It's almost as deep as soccer management game *LMA*.

A brand new Mini Camp mode offers an incredibly addictive sub-game where you travel the country completing coaching tasks and collecting

those illusive Madden cards. There's even a multitude of scalable options and guidance from the man himself to ease newcomers into the game.

If the on-field antics were a bit more thrilling and less disjointed, the multi-player game might have lived up to the remarkable single-player mode. Unfortunately, due to the nature of the sport, too much time is spent making tactical decisions, so you end up spending as much time on the menu screens as you do out on the field.

/ MIKEY FOLEY



PACKING HIM OFF TO HELL Up close, the detail on the player's faces is incredible.



HUT, HUT Will you shut up about your bloody garden shed?

VERDICT PSW

UPPERS

- Visuals are beautiful
- Extremely comprehensive
- Excellent Franchise mode
- Gameplay is as good as ever

DOWNERS

- Perhaps too deep for some
- Games take a fair time
- Unlikely to win over non-fans
- Multiplayer is slooooooow

GRAPHICS - You could almost be watching it on TV **9**

SOUND - At last they've updated the commentary **8**

LIFESPAN - A full blown management game **9**

OVERALL SCORE

If you love american football you simply must own this game. Even if you just have a passing interest in the sport it's still welcoming to newcomers, but thrillseekers need not apply.

8

NHL 2003



IT'S THE SPORT THAT HAS EVERYTHING: SUPER FAST ACTION, MASS BRAWLS AND AN ENDLESS SUPPLY OF 'PUCK' GAGS.

TYPE	SPORTS
PLAYERS	1-4
OUT	NOW
DISTRIBUTOR	EA
PRICE	\$99.95
DEVELOPER	EA SPORTS
RATED	G

LAST YEAR'S NHL GAME WAS A

massive improvement over the previous edition. Wholesale changes to such a class game were never expected for this installment, so we weren't surprised to find *NHL 2003* dressing up in its 2002 outfit with a couple of new stripes sewn onto the sleeves. The question is whether these less radical improvements will be enough to make this latest version an essential purchase, or just one for the hardcore hockey fans.

Trying to control your stick independently of your player's movement is akin to rubbing your belly and patting your head. Give it time however, and this new feature will soon become your best friend in the whole world. Fooling the goalie and sending him the wrong way with a quick flick of the stick is now possible, as is the ability to deke your way past defenders who've committed themselves too early. For *NHL* experts it's like suddenly discovering a third arm.

Aside from these new controls, all of the other changes to *NHL 2003* are far less radical and more of an evolutionary step towards hockeying perfection. Last year's Season mode has now evolved into a full blown Franchise mode with the ability to develop your squad and reign supreme at

the top of the standings for years. Collecting all of the NHL cards is even more addictive, and the probability of fights can still be whacked up to 'inevitable' with the multitude of options on offer.

If you haven't got an *NHL* game on PS2 and you've got a passing interest in the sport, *NHL 2003* is essential. However, if you've already got the 2002 edition, only you can decide if you just can't live without independent stick control and a host of gameplay tweaks and visual touch-ups.

/ MIKEY FOLEY



PUCK'S EYE VIEW This was his last image, before being brutally whacked with a wooden stick.



ICE TO SEE YOU The pun potential is almost off the scale.

VERDICT PSW

UPPERS

- The AI is greatly improved
- Independent stick control
- Ability to deke
- Still plenty of fighting

DOWNERS

- Not vital if you have 2002
- It's still rather end-to-end
- NHL Hitz is almost as good
- We still prefer football

GRAPHICS - As good looking as ever with flash new touches **8**

SOUND - The OTT commentary remains first class **8**

LIFESPAN - Play out a career with the new Franchise mode **8**

OVERALL SCORE

Still the very best ice hockey game available on PS2, but the changes this time aren't quite radical enough to make it an essential purchase for owners of *NHL 2002*.

8



TERMINATOR: DAWN OF FATE

"I'LL BE BACK." NO YOU WON'T.

TYPE	ACTION
PLAYERS	1
OUT	NOW
DISTRIBUTOR	INFOGRAMES
PRICE	\$99.95
DEVELOPER	PARADIGM
RATED	M 15+

FIRST OF ALL, ARNIE ISN'T IN IT.

The renowned condom stuffed with walnuts may have told us he'd be back, but Infogrames didn't buy it. So now we have a Terminator game minus one of the major reasons why we would want to play a Terminator game. Not a good start then, I'm sure you'd agree.

Second, anyone played *Dino Crisis* on PSone? It was a solid Jurassic riff on the survival horror theme, but ultimately fell short of rivals *Resident Evil* and *Silent Hill*. Capcom opted for a more action-oriented experience, playing down the puzzles in favour of a greater number of enemies and combat situations. Yet due to the retention of the stilted camerawork and lethargic control scheme, frustration regularly out-stripped the suspense. *Terminator: Dawn of Fate* falls into the same trap.

Here's a shooter played from a third-person perspective and fixed camera angles. Not only is it problematic to aim properly, thanks to the limited field of view, but the constant camera switching

makes even moving around much more difficult than it ought to be. A first-person mode is available, thus improving shooting accuracy, yet you cannot move until you jump back to the third-person mode. So you end being shot by things you can't even see and walking around in circles as the camera switches at the least opportune moments. Needless to say, the whole clumsy exercise is a far cry (if you'll excuse the pun) from the intuitive and graceful *Devil May Cry*.

Perhaps the developer realised the controls weren't exactly the best and so decided to compensate by pitting you against some of the stupidest enemies we've encountered on the PS2. They lumber at you with a single-mindedness bordering on the moronic, ignoring the subtleties of, say, dodging your fire or using objects as cover. Who'd have thought that in 2027 with an AI ruling the planet that its cyborg minions would be quite so thick? With these fools as foes, how did the human race end up on the losing side? Baffling.

Elsewhere, this is a fairly impressive recreation of the nightmare future world we know from the films. The dark, oppressive environments are



LAUNDRY SERVICE What happens when you the dryer on too long.



BLIND FIGHTING Shooting another enemy you can't see. Hurrah.



BRAINLESS BOTS Oh no, they're gonna trample me to death!



PANTS ON FIRE Remarkably laidback for a man burning to death.

convincingly portrayed, while the lovely, atmospheric cut-scenes do much to draw you into the rebels' struggle against SkyNet. However, it's sad to report that all this effort has only been used to depict a deeply mediocre blast-a-thon through a dozen bland, run-of-the-mill missions. It's shoot, shoot, curse the controls, and shoot some more all the way through. Yawn.

Annie certainly wouldn't approve.

/ DAVID WILDGOOSE



BOILER ROOM It's okay, I've got your back covered. Phew.

VERDICT		PSW
UPPERS	DOWNERS	
- Looks lovely in places	- Terrible controls	
- Awesome rendered cut-scenes	- Third-person - why?	
- Story has enough of a hook	- Horrendous camerawork	
- Lots of guns	- Deeply frustrating	
GRAPHICS	- Post-apocalypse-tastic! Nice lighting effects, too	7
SOUND	- Excellent orchestral score, adequate voice-acting	8
LIFESPAN	- Not short, but far too simplistic	5
OVERALL SCORE		5
Completely fails to do justice to the legendary films. Occasionally fun, but flawed in so many ways. Just plain ordinary.		



YE OLDE TREND It's LOTR now, King Arthur is sooo 1995.



MORGAN'S ORGANS Who goes there....and did you bring Marshmallows?



PITIFUL PATTEN The sound of the rain is pretty shoddy.

LEGION: THE LEGEND OF EXCALIBUR

GAMING GOES BACK TO THE DARK AGES IN THIS THROWBACK TO SIMPLE SLASHERS OF YORE.

TYPE	ACTION ADVENTURE
PLAYERS	1
OUT	NOW
DISTRIBUTOR	ACCLAIM
PRICE	\$99.95
DEVELOPER	7 STUDIOS
RATED	M15+

THIS LOOKS A BIT LIKE LORD OF

the Rings, which is probably why it's coming out about now. You play Arthur, King Arthur, him of the round table, the guy with the sword and the lake, the one who stole from the rich and gave to the poor people of Sherwood Forest. Or... something like that. Some British history stuff anyway, hence the suits of armour and 'gawd bloimey moy love' voice acting, should you forget where you are.

Here, your challenge is to follow various missions based in Arthurian locations (Camelot, the woods), most of which may be neatly summarised by saying you run around with a sword doing rapid stabby movements. The game also contains what we mockingly refer to as "RPG elements", meaning there are items to find and equip, and a group of warriors to control. The team management bit is quite neat. Once you've collected a few extra knights they fight alongside

you, with a press of one of the shoulder buttons directing them to attack and generally help out.

Morgan Le Fay is your enemy for the duration of this game, and strike us blind if she hasn't got the largest bosoms in all of Christendom. Once you've found Excalibur, it's off through 14 missions of simple hacking to cleanse the land. How exactly do you gain possession of Excalibur? By sitting through five minutes of cut-scenes and killing one enemy. Take it, you've earned it.

The game doesn't look bad, it's just far away. Everything's small, viewed from a distant camera that gives you no feeling of immersion. It zooms in once – when you die – so you're able to read the simple text notification of your passing. "Arthur is dead. You fail", is your signal to try again, this time being a bit more patient and not just wading into an area and triggering all of the attackers at once.

The non-moving camera tries to make amends for itself by making scenery transparent when it

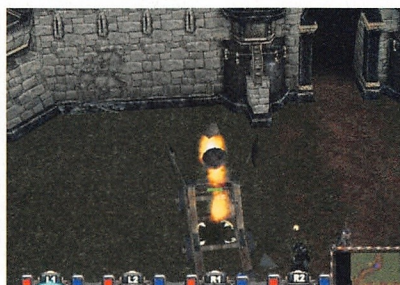
comes between you and the view. Stand near something and it tends to disappear. At first this seems to aid your progress, then you realise walls, trees, houses and everything else is often made invisible just by their closeness to the camera. So finding your way through the levels becomes a nightmare of edging around invisible walls.

The group control and "RPG elements" make it a little more interesting than some, but the samey slash-slash-magic-slash gameplay makes it a lot less enjoyable to play. The "go there, kill him" storyline quickly becomes tiresome as well. If you're old enough to remember King Arthur you may find this exciting, but most gamers got bored of this kind of thing last century.

/ GARY CUTLACK



KING AWFUL The game guesses your current interest level.



LEGIONNAIRE'S BUG It's so far away, what exactly is going on?

VERDICT		PSW
UPPERS	DOWNERS	
- Original team-control angle - Nice movie clips - Um, looks a bit like <i>LotR</i> - Nice knockers on enemy	- Confusing invisible scenery - A bit too simple to play - Doesn't look that hot - Way too ugly to love	
GRAPHICS	Small characters, wonky camera, bland scenery	5
SOUND	Rain sounds like static, accents are worse	3
LIFESPAN	Easy to hack through, occasional tough bits	4
OVERALL SCORE		3
It's a shame it took so long for this game to arrive. Had it come out when Arthur was alive it would've done much better. It's an awful run-and-slash affair that's 1000 years out of date.		



SOLAR WINDS Shouldn't that ship be airtight? Won't they all die?



LAND AHOY! Pirates. In space. They're space pirates, natch.

TREASURE PLANET

A SCI-FI TREASURE ISLAND REPLETE WITH SPACE PIRATES AND A HOLOGRAPHIC LONG JOHN SILVER. UH-HUH OKAY...

TYPE	ACTION / ADVENTURE
PLAYERS	1
OUT	NOW
DISTRIBUTOR	SONY
PRICE	\$99.95
DEVELOPER	BIZZARE
RATED	G

WE'VE NOT SEEN THE FILM UPON which this nifty little exploration/platforming/extreme sports adventure is based. In fact, we didn't even know there was a film until we spied the Disney logo splashed across the intro screens. But, suffice to say, *Treasure Planet* is an upcoming animated feature inspired by [that is, it's a very loose re-telling of] Robert Louis Stevenson's epic pirate tale, *Treasure Island*.

If the game is at all faithful to the film's narrative then expect some very confused kiddies walking out of cinemas around the country this Christmas. And some arch film critics applauding Disney's avant garde experiment. However, given the typical film-to-video game translation, we suspect that fidelity to the source was the last thing on the developer's mind.

Curiously, the developer in question is UK outfit, Bizarre Creations, creator of accomplished driving games such as *Metropolis Street Racer* and *Project Gotham Racing*. Quite why they chose to slum it with a knock-it-out-in-six-months film license, we're not sure. Maybe it's because they thought they could actually produce a game worth playing. And

— hey - they have, too.

Over its entire length, *Treasure Planet* oscillates between two discernible gaming types. One is yer run-of-the-mill platformer, replete with tricky jumping sequences and treacherous chasms into which you'll often fall to your death. The other plonks you atop a futuristic hoverboard for some high-speed racing and daredevil jumping, and generally mixes *Freekstyle* with *Tony Hawk* to good effect.

There's a linear path through the levels, which presumably reflects the journey lead character Jim Hawkins takes during the film. Yet it never feels linear due to the wealth of things to do along the way. Each stage comes with half a dozen or so goals, all of which can be completed across several attempts. You may be asked to race a circuit in a specific time limit, smash a certain number of crates, find 100 coins, grind along three rails on your hoverboard or any other kind of task that involves a number and some wacky object. It's a structural formula we've seen plenty of times before, but the sheer variety here makes it difficult to lose interest.

Additionally, new stages are unlocked through activating a certain number of gates in each level. The required number of gates is always significantly less than the maximum possible, meaning you'll usually have a handful of stages to

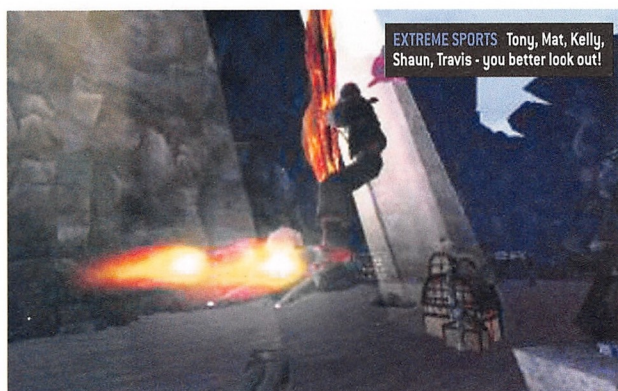


WIFEBEATER As far as Beckhams go, that's about the worst.

choose from, plus several ongoing tasks in each. So if it all gets too hard you can just go and find another objective to complete.

There's an exuberance about *Treasure Planet* that's easy to enjoy, due in part to the loose, forgiving controls and lightning pace at which Jim runs and boards. It's no *Jak & Daxter* (And no *Ratchet & Clank* either — Ed), but it's much better than it has any right to be.

/ DAVID WILDGOOSE



TREASURE HUNT "Hey, anyone seen a coin? Or a crate perhaps?"

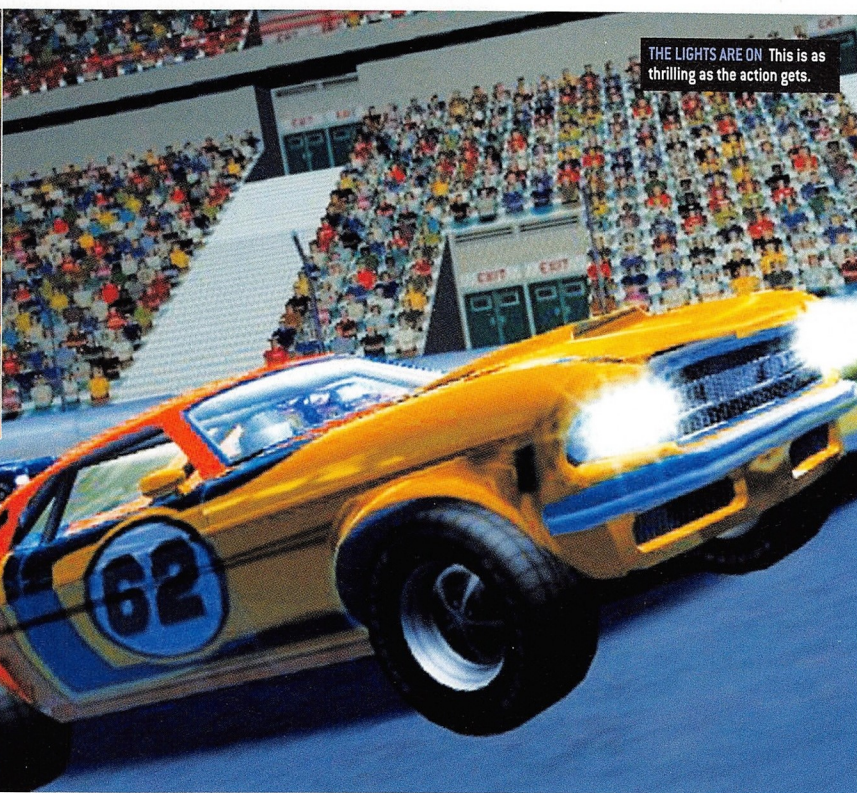
VERDICT		PSW
UPPERS	DOWNERS	
- Joyfully exuberant	- Too jumpy-jumpy at times	
- Varied tasks to complete	- Fairly generic	
- Looks nice	- Long, dull conversations	
- Includes clips from the film	- Nothing new	
GRAPHICS	- Huge, varied locations at a smart framerate	7
SOUND	- Genuinely forgettable	5
LIFESPAN	- Lots to see and do and come back to	7
OVERALL SCORE		7
A good example of how to do a film tie-in properly. That is, forget the film and just make a decent game. All up, a solid platformer that fails to put a foot wrong.		



SWIPE STUFF Giving the crashes names doesn't help much.



PULL UP TO THE BUMPER Unfortunately it's as sexy as Grace Jones.



CRASHED

THE HOPE OF A CRASH IS ALL THAT KEEPS F1 FANS FROM A COMA.
WHY NOT CUT OUT ALL THE DULL STUFF AND CRANK UP THE CARNAGE?

TYPE	DRIVING
PLAYERS	1-2
OUT	NOW
DISTRIBUTOR	ACTIVISION
PRICE	\$99.95
DEVELOPER	RAGE
RATED	G
SEE IT ON DVD	
/ Twisted metal / Mental carnage / There's little else here...	

C'MON ADMIT IT, WE'VE ALL BEEN

guilty of it. You've barely had the wrapping off your very first F1 game or got to grips with the handling of the latest installment of the *TOCA* series before you're steaming into the pack in the wrong direction to see how much carnage you can cause.

It's an inescapable fact that there's an innate destructive trait in all of us that craves the sight of flying bonnets, shattering windows and the thrill of ploughing into oncoming machines at maniacal speeds. It's why the *Destruction Derby* games proved so popular on PSone and why the developer of *Crashed* has decided to dispense with any delicate overtaking and give us more ram-raiding than an entire series of *Police Camera Action*.

Crashed rips up the chequered flag, mulches it into the ground beneath its burning tyres and encourages you to batter your opponents into submission instead. The harder you drive and the more damage you inflict, the higher your score. The varied game modes involve reaching a preset score target first, surviving the bedlam of a free-for-all to be the last one standing, and leaping over a rack of buses in the stunt arena.

Unfortunately most of these game types tend to follow an identical pattern, and those that don't are barely worthy of a mention. No matter how different the course, you still just roam around ploughing into anything that moves. There's very little strategy or skill involved, so it doesn't take long to feel very samey and tedious.

Race tracks exist for a reason, and when you've spent ten minutes driving round in ad-libbed figures of eight, circles, and... more circles, you realise why. Should you go forwards? Perhaps backwards now. Maybe turn left. Who cares?

The modes that don't fall into this simple smash pattern are even worse. The nature of Last Man Standing encourages you to do the total opposite of what *Crashed* is all about, and potter about avoiding everyone so that you can survive by taking minimal damage. Its tediousness is only surpassed by the utterly pointless stunt events that seem to be devoid of any sort of driving challenge whatsoever. Motor over a ramp and through the air for a couple of seconds and it's 'challenge complete'.

Your car-wrecking woes aren't helped by a combination of overly twitchy handling and a view that never quite shows you enough of the arena. Cars steam off of nowhere, leaving you with no

opportunity to use your driving skills to avoid a serious mauling. And when you manage to get a rival in your sights, your own vehicle's over-sensitive handling makes ramming a real chore as you weave about like a drunk, crashing into scenery that appears out of nowhere on your blind side. The vehicles are so light and willing to swerve violently that they feel more like radio controlled toys than prowling muscle cars.

Crashed suffers partly from a lack of focus inherent in any game that concentrates on pelting into other cars rather than developing a skillful approach to driving. But mainly it expires in an embarrassed puff of smoke because it fails to provide a challenge that you'll bother persevering with. Repetitive and often tedious would be an accurate summation of this disappointing attempt to re-invent the *Destruction Derby* magic.

/ MIKEY FOLEY



DUDE, WATCH MY CAR! The novelty of the carnage fades out as repetition sets in.

VERDICT		PSW
UPPERS	DOWNERS	
- Colourful visuals	- Twitchy handling	
- Plenty to unlock	- Lightweight cars	
- Numerous race modes	- Restrictive view	
- It's fun, for a few minutes	- Bus jumping	
GRAPHICS	- Basic car damage models and bland tracks	5
SOUND	- Growling engines [good], tinny crashes [poor]	5
LIFESPAN	- Tracks and cars to unlock, but why bother?	5
OVERALL SCORE		4
When the thrill of ramming another car into destruction wears off you're left with a game with twitchy handling that lacks substance. Crashing is best when it's accidental.		



BLADE 2

WHAT ABOUT BLADE 1? OH, IT'S FILM. SORRY.

TYPE	ACTION
PLAYERS	1
OUT	NOW
DISTRIBUTOR	ACTIVISION
PRICE	\$99.95
DEVELOPER	MUCKY FOOT
RATED	MA 15+

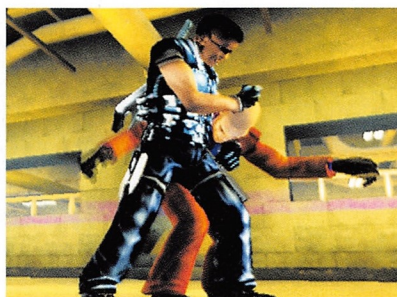
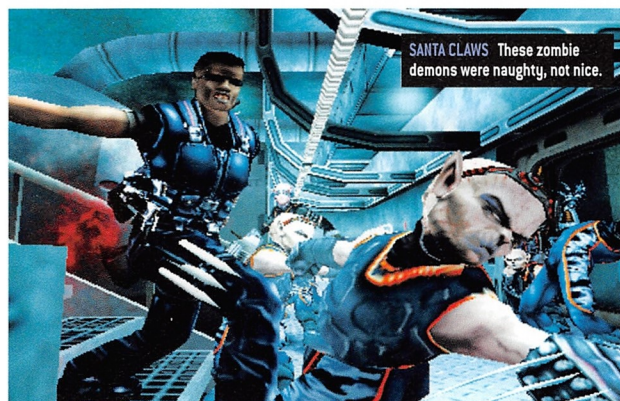
IT'S THE PERFECT VEHICLE FOR THE film to videogame conversion process. There's none of those tricky elements like narrative exposition or character depth – two things games tend to do very badly – to worry about. Yet there's plenty of brutal, over-the-top violence, the stuff upon which the entire games industry appears to have been founded. And, as an added bonus, it's all set in a dark, sexy future full of vampires and sad goths. Everyone wears black, thus saving the PS2's precious texture memory. But sadly things don't go according to this seemingly foolproof plan.

Blade 2 is a rather depressing, formulaic action adventure. It doffs its hat at innovation, thanks to the curious analogue fighting system, yet inevitably retreats into by-the-numbers blandness for the majority of the game. As mentioned above, there's only the barest of a plot thread: the eponymous Blade is a bad-ass human/vampire and his thankless job is to kill everyone he meets. At least that's how it appears once you start

roaming from one dull location to the next vaguely less interesting one in search of some – any! – spark of inspiration.

By the end of the first level – during the slaying of your 50th vamp, perhaps – you may just about have gotten to grips with the odd analogue method used to direct melee attacks. The idea is you can flick the right analogue stick to attack enemies approaching you from any direction: if you're facing left then pushing right will cause Blade to kick behind him. It sounds nice in theory, but fails to offer anything over simply hitting the face buttons and certainly doesn't exploit the potential of actual analogue movement. In essence, you're reduced to waggling to stick, which is just mashing by another name.

Waggle that stick enough and you will build up Blade's Rage meter, thus enabling access to his oh-so-special attacks. The first one is the ability to use a sword to execute a range of devastating slice and dice manoeuvres. Cool, huh? Not at all. Actually it's rather stupid. You see, Blade carries the sword with him at all times, but he's only able to reach around and remove it from the sheath on his back when he gets angry enough. He's Blade, for chrissakes! Why



GETTING INTIMATE Finishing move or sexual deviancy? You decide.



HAVE AT YOU They all had leg cramps for the rest of the shoot.



OUTNUMBERED Where's Buffy when you really need her?



HEAD JOB They don't need heads, they're mindless enemies.



ROAST BEEFCAKE Wesley proves he can remain in the kitchen.

can't he use his bloody sword whenever he wants? It's such an absurdly cheap way to balance the game and developer Mucky Foot (of *Urban Chaos* fame) should know much better.

Perhaps the real reason to limit Blade's access to his sword is to stop him from simply driving it through his heart at the start of the game, thus saving the player from having to endure this desperately unimaginative exercise in franchise milking. It'd be a better world if he did, believe me.

/ DAVID WILDGOOSE

VERDICT		PSW
UPPERS	DOWNERS	
- Captures the film's spirit...	- Pointless Rage system	
- ...kind of	- Repetitive combat	
- Grisly death animations	- Generic level design	
- Analogue combat nearly works	- Analogue combat nearly works	
GRAPHICS	- The entire world is brown and grey	5
SOUND	- Wesley doesn't do his voice	5
LIFESPAN	- Short and extremely boring	4
OVERALL SCORE		4
The perfect example of how not to do a film to videogame conversion. There's no excuse for such a shoddy, rough and frankly dull gaming experience.		



HELLO? His friends hid round the corner, stifling sniggers.



HOLD TIGHT! We're hitting a lightspeed-esque 57mph!



RIDING SPIRITS

LOTS OF BEAUTIFUL, BEAUTIFUL BIKES. AND SOME ROAD! MILES AND MILES OF IT! WHAT MORE COULD WE POSSIBLY WANT?

TYPE	RACING
PLAYERS	1-2
OUT	NOW
DISTRIBUTOR	THQ
PRICE	\$99.95
DEVELOPER	SPIKE
RATED	G
SEE IT ON DVD	
/ Vroommmmm.... / Plenty of pacey bikes / But some dodgy handling... / No spirits though	

WE MADE A SLIGHT MISCALCULATION

with this game at preview stage. We said it had 40 bikes, although the real figure is ever so slightly higher. Like, around 200. Oops. And anyone who started biking in the 80s or 90s is going to love them – there's a fantastic selection of sports bikes from early large-engined, bendy-framed monstrosities to the first of the lightweight screamers, right through to the extreme superbikes of today. They're all impressively modelled, and many have a selection of colour schemes. As eye candy and the chance to fantasise, they're great. But as motorcycles for riding, they're not so great.

Riding Spirits obviously owes a lot to *Gran Turismo*, although sadly not a lot of the right things. Certainly the inclusion of a large banked

oval just like *GT*'s test track was regrettable, especially when it's so blandly textured in comparison. The races here are the most tedious things you can imagine, and those huge corners only serve to highlight the lack of analogue finesse in the steering. It's hard to get the bike to the desired angle, so you weave up and down instead – and when you're on a twistier track, it's disastrous. Even the lightest of the two strokes seem to need three working days to get to full bank, which doesn't sit well with the otherwise realistic-looking machines. Turn in too late and you might as well give up, as there's nothing you can do to save it, which worries riders into turning in too soon, which is equally disastrous. It's stodgy and requires nothing but stubborn learning of braking and turn-in points, leaving no room for winging it through a bend by the skin of your teeth. The *Moto GP* games win hands down.

At least you can turn the braking help on in the quick races, leaving you to concentrate on just your lines, but you shouldn't have to do it. And even then, success is merely satisfying rather than exciting: where are the wheelies, the jumps over

crests, the tankslappers, the heart-stopping slides, the sparks from decked-out exhausts? How can you have *Riding Spirits* without the spirit of biking? Many of these accelerate like rocks off a cliff in real life, but here it's all rather listless. Top speeds get higher, true, and the bikes can be tuned, but they never get any more fun. It feels as if their performance levels have been rather brutally hacked to make them fit into the progressively-faster game structure – Yamaha TZR 250s that struggle to maintain 100mph and turn slower than a Kawasaki GPZ1000RX? If you found one like that you wouldn't ride it, you'd scrap it.

Essentially you race to earn cash, which you then spend on new leathers, helmets, bikes and tuning parts. Sadly, unless collecting the bikes simply because of what they are gets you going, the overall experience is at best mundane. Motorcycling should be a lot more fun than this.

/ STEVEN WILLIAMS



WHIRL SUPERBIKES It's the road version of Colin Edwards' WSB – feel the lust.



DRESSED UP It might look like a Fireblade, but 400cc doesn't cut it

VERDICT PSW

UPPERS	DOWNERS
· Great selection of bikes	· Sluggish, patchy steering
· Well-modelled machines	· No jumps or wheelies
· Satisfying when it works	· Clean-looking but uninspired
· Selection of real gear	· Simply not exciting enough

GRAPHICS	· Great bikes, mediocre tracks	7
SOUND	· Tiny exhausts, weedy music	4
LIFESPAN	· Lots of bikes to ride – if you really care	7

OVERALL SCORE
Riding Spirits has all the components of a great game, but somehow comes out as less than the sum of its parts. The bikes are appealing, but riding them doesn't get the pulse racing.

6

GRAVITY GAMES: BIKE

WE THINK THE FULL TITLE IS GRAVITY GAMES: BIKE - STREET, VERT, DIRT. LUCKILY THERE WON'T BE A SEQUEL.

TYPE	RACING
PLAYERS	1
OUT	NOW
DISTRIBUTOR	ACCLAIM
PRICE	\$99.95
DEVELOPER	GRAVITY GAMES
RATED	G

THIS GAME IS ABYSMAL.

It's not often that you can say that straight off without reservation.

Midway has not only strayed from the road, they've lost sight of civilisation with this BMX sports title that sits alongside some of the worst games on the PS2.

Rather than lifting Dave Mirra's controls wholesale, *Gravity Games* decided to customise them to horrific effect. Forward on the analog stick is accelerate, while holding X makes the rider go faster and when

released, jump. This doesn't work at all and makes the basic interface difficult and clumsy. It's also confusing because Forward changes the rider's pitch while in the air. Entering a half pipe, you have no idea whether you'll go straight up and come back down or flatten out and fly over the thing because you may have held forward for too long.

Hell, who cares? Doing aerial tricks is nigh on impossible anyway. Manual combinations require movements like Fwd, Fwd then Back. Three direction movements to get on one wheel? Clumsy. This makes the continuous flow from grinds, to manuals to ramps practically impossible. The cumbersome control interface makes these attempts fruitless.

And the camera? Shocking. Turn 180 degrees and

the camera gets stuck just above the rider's head, making things impossible to see. Not to mention the fixed camera positions - on spectacular jumps and such - that eliminate the possibility of landing.

Collision detection? Embarrassing. Ride too close to a wall and you get stuck alongside it.

At best, *Bike: Street, Dirt, Vert* is dull, repetitive and unresponsive. At worst, it's a blight on games as a whole. How can I recommend this game to anyone when I actively hate it?

/ JOHN DEWHURST



VERDICT

PSW

UPPERS

- Ummm...
- ...
- ...
- May cure videogame addiction

DOWNERS

- Interface, Physics, level design
- Doesn't self destruct
- Some poor kid will get this
- Made me very sad today

GRAPHICS - Possibly the best thing this game has to offer 6

SOUND - Soundtrack is abject 1

LIFESPAN - Still-born 1

OVERALL SCORE

With its terrible controls, horrendous physics and complete lack of appeal, this game shows just how good the Tony Hawks and Mat Hoffmans really are.

1

SUPER BUST-A-MOVE AGAIN

NICE WAY TO PRE-EMPT CRITICISM OF YOUR REHASHED NEW GAME. MAYBE MORE PUBLISHERS SHOULD FOLLOW SUIT.

TYPE	PUZZLE
PLAYERS	1-2
OUT	NOW
DISTRIBUTOR	UBISOFT
PRICE	\$49.95
DEVELOPER	TAITO
RATED	G

YES, THAT'S REALLY WHAT IT'S CALLED.

In a remarkable show of literalness, Taito has afforded its latest bubble-shooting puzzler the suffix 'Again', as in "Oh, look, it's *Super Bust-A-Move. Again!*". Which pretty much sums up our reaction upon receiving the review code. It's more *Bust-A-Move*, only twelve months later and sporting a few new features.

Taking its cue from classic colour-based *Tetris* make-over *Columns*, the *Bust-A-Move* series inverts the formula by having the player fire a series of Xmas

baubles up the screen with the intent of linking three or more of the same colour. Succeed and they'll burst, vanishing from the screen along with any other bubbles they were supporting. The obvious aim is to clear the entire screen before the remainder, which steadily descend like menacing *Space Invaders* of yore, reach the bottom of the well.

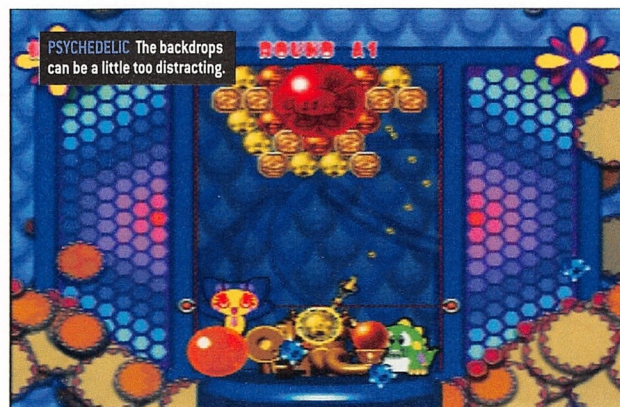
There are essentially two modes of play: solo and competitive. Aside from the addition of two new characters, each with their own pattern of attack, the competitive modes are as they were in the previous game. If you only enjoy the intense one-up-manship of *Bust-A-Move* battles with friends, then this new version isn't worth the money.

However, Taito has certainly lengthened the experience for the dedicated solo puzzler. The story

mode presents a varied multi-tiered five stage challenge in which you strive to earn the undoubtedly prestigious title of Puzzle Master thanks to the kind of wonderfully surreal "plot" only the Japanese could devise. Compared to the previous iteration, there's at least twice as much play time to be had.

Again is definitely the best in the series - not only is there more to do, but the loading times are blessedly much shorter than in *Super Bust-A-Move*.

/ DAVID WILDGOOSE



VERDICT

PSW

UPPERS

- Same puzzling perfection
- Solo modes add longevity
- Two new characters
- Quicker loading times

DOWNERS

- Same puzzling perfection
- Identical multiplayer modes
- Only two new characters
- Rainbow bubbles suck

GRAPHICS - Simple, but impossibly appealing 6

SOUND - Bouncy muzak and cute voices 6

LIFESPAN - Endless multiplayer fun 7

OVERALL SCORE

More than the sum of its parts, *Bust-A-Move* remains a quality puzzle title. There's nothing truly new here, but it's still the same addictive game we all love.

8



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SOLUTIONS

THE DUST IS BLOWN FROM THE COVER AND THE GRAND TOME OF GAMES KNOWLEDGE IS OPENED...

WE LOVE YOU ALL

DEBATE RAGES ON AS TO WHETHER games are harmful to children. But little research seems to focus on whether they're problematic for adults. Most of us here are grown-ups (physically at least) but we still find ourselves getting excited upon the news of *Pro Evolution Soccer 3* or *Tekken 9*. Is this healthy, or should we all be laughed at by society as dangerous freaks still hooked on fighting games? Well, let's take a look. *PSW* contains some of Australia's most hardened and enthusiastic gamers – some new to it all, and some who have been here since *Pong 2* was considered cutting-edge. Within our team there are no criminals. Most are in stable relationships. Everyone is tolerant and peace-loving. See, games work! So we pass onto you not just PS2 advice but a moral code as well.

/ MIKEY FOLEY SOLUTIONS EDITOR

TEKKEN 4

88

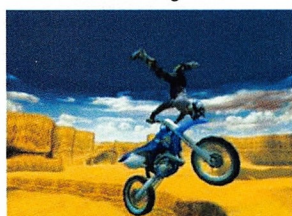
■ With more combos than a KFC menu, you need help.



MX SUPERFLY

88

■ Crack the tough bike game that isn't *Freekstyle*.



SILENT SCOPE

89

■ We've never seen a noisy scope, but there you go.



PUZZLE BOXES Use our full puzzle guide to gain extra weapons.

ONIMUSHA 2: SAMURAI'S DESTINY

DEATH? DESTRUCTION? DEMONS? THE LIFE OF A SAMURAI MAY BE PACKED WITH MORE DRAMA THAN AN EPISODE OF THE BILL, BUT IT'S NO EASY LIFE...

PSW TELLS YOU ALL YOU NEED TO KNOW about defeating demons, building alliances, finding the special items, completing the puzzles and unlocking the secrets.

GENERAL HINTS AND TIPS

WEAPONS

You have a whole host of weapons at your disposal. Each character you control (For the most part its Jubei) has different fighting styles and weapons. Your choice depends on the situation you are in. For hordes of enemies you should select a weapon that can execute fast moves. For the best part this is the Buraitou. Because of its speed you can take on multiple enemies at once.



CHAT AND GRAB Talk to everyone to get hints and items.

You should keep your distance from the bigger enemies and the best way to do this is to use a long-range weapon such as the Hyoujin-Yari. This allows you to prod your foes and keep them at bay.

Because of the need for different weapons in different situations you need to ensure that you do not enhance just the one weapon. Even if you feel you have not been using a weapon a lot, always charge each one up equally. This way, when you do find yourself in a situation that requires it, it'll be all powered up for you.

NORMAL WEAPONS

YAGYU SWORD

The weakest of the swords. You only need



DON'T LOSE ALL YOUR WORK Save at any of these points.

this during the early stages. It's redundant once you have the Buraitou Sword.

BOW AND ARROW

Only needed when fighting against raised archers and the Gyaran Queen. You can't block when using it so only whip it out when necessary. Allows the use of normal arrows and fire arrows.

TANEGASHIMA

A gun that fires a normal shot. Pretty good for keeping enemies in the distance, but up close it's fairly useless and leaves you very vulnerable to attack.

TRI-BARREL GUN

Good for causing damage to groups of



If you find anything rare, please let me know.

GIFTS A PLENTY Talking to your allies will give you clues.

KOTARO

GIFT	GOODWILL POINTS
Cameo	High
Chick	High
Compass	High
Emblem	High
European Hat	High
Fairy Tale Book	High
Flute	High
Gabishi	High
Globe	High
Gold Egg	High
Gold Chick	High
Gold Chicken	High
Green Parrot	High
Hein Kyahan	High
History Book Vol. 8	High
Incense	High
Kaleidoscope	High
Keimyo Hachimaki	High
Music Box	High
Pair Ring	High
Pandora's Box	High
Playing Cards	High
Pocket Watch	High
Telescope	High
Tube For Pigeon Leg	High
Telescope	High
Black Pills	Medium
Brown Chick	Medium
Brown Egg	Medium
Chicken	Medium
Cloth	Medium
Confetti	Medium
Crown	Medium
Crystal Ball	Medium
Dice	Medium
Fancy Paper	Medium
Folding Fan	Medium
Lemon	Medium
Mirror	Medium
Oolong Tea	Medium
Persian Rug	Medium
Pound Cake	Medium
Calligraphy Kit	Low
Deer Antlers	Low
Fork	Low
Gold Coin	Low
Gourd	Low
History Book Vol. 6	Low
History Book Vol. 9	Low
Rotten Fish	Low
Salt	Low
Scarf	Low
Taiheiki	Low
Water Melon	Low
Wonder Flower	Low



enemies. Like the bow and arrow you cannot block when using this weapon.

ONI WEAPONS

BURAITOU

For the first quarter of the game you'll use this a lot. It's quick and allows you to dispatch of multiple enemies. It's a short-range weapon though so it can prove dangerous to use against the larger enemies, especially those that have numerous unblockable attacks.

HYOUJIN-YARI

Your first long-range weapon. The Hyoujin-Yari is one of the most useful weapons in the game. Not only can it sweep through clumps of smaller enemies, but it can also keep the larger more dangerous baddies at arms length.

SENPMARU

A double bladed weapon that can be use in a violent spin. This move can obliterate clumps of enemies. It is an extremely fast weapon, but it is pretty weak. Use on the smaller enemies.

DOKOTSUI

A slow but, extremely powerful weapon. Its magic attack will harm all enemies in a room, but its sluggish speed leaves you vulnerable. Only use against slow moving large enemies.

REKKA-KEN

This is the ultimate weapon. Make an effort to claim it as it makes the final three bosses much easier to defeat.

SEARCHING

Items are extremely important and this means that you have to search. Searching doesn't just mean scouring each and every

corner of each and every area (although that is needed) but you should also talk to everyone you see. Talk to them as many times as you can, especially on return trips to previously visited places. Villages will offer items or gifts after numerous conversations, so be patient, as you'll eventually get your rewards.

ALLIES

The gift section further on in the guide explains how to befriend each of the sub-characters. This is vital as it can effect how the game evolves. They'll pop up to help you during different fights and it is well worth knowing that they are invincible. This means that you can let them plough into enemies while you take a breather. During their scuffles, your allies will also release some souls for you, allowing you to absorb and top up your magic.

BUILDING ALLIES

A major part of *Onimusha 2* is the act of gift giving. Who you befriend and how dramatically alters the story and the cut-scenes you'll see. Ultimately this means that it is impossible to see everything there is in just one play through. Bad news for the impatient among you!

There's a huge array of gift items dotted throughout the game and each gift you give will cause a reaction. The tables below list the gifts that will create a positive reaction [Alliance points] The more Alliance points you receive off a character the more interaction you will have with them during the game. When you collect an item, decide whom to give it to and check out the reaction you'll get. Learn from the type of gifts the character likes.

If you do not see the item on a particular characters chart, it means you'll get a negative reaction.



SOUL TAKERS These glowing blobs absorb any souls hanging around.



AN EGG? This becomes one of the best gifts around.



LONG DISTANCE Preserve your health and keep foes at bay.

WHICH CAME FIRST, THE CHICKEN OR THE EGG?

You may wonder where you get the chickens. Well, they begin with the humble egg. If you purchase an egg from the Imasho Shop, leave it in your inventory. Eventually it hatches into a chick. Leave that for a while and it grows in to a chicken. This in turn lays a brown egg. This hatches into a brown chick, which grows into a brown chicken. Soon enough the brown chicken lays a golden egg. Obviously this soon grows into a golden chicken, a very valuable item.

PUZZLE SOLUTIONS

As you progress through the game a number of puzzles need to be completed. Luckily for you, PSW has dedicated this next section to solving them all.

THE MINES OF IMASHO

TILE PUZZLE ONE (PRIZE: BURAITOU SECRET)

1. You have to complete this one in two moves. First, select the bottom arrow on the right side.
2. Slide the tiles across then activate the left arrow on the bottom.

TILE PUZZLE TWO (PRIZE: HYOUJIN-YARI SECRET)

1. You have to complete this puzzle in four moves. First activate the right arrow on the bottom.
2. Now slide the tiles across using the upper arrow on the right side.
3. Select the left arrow on the bottom.
4. Finally hit the right arrow on the bottom.

GIJU KEEP TOWER

THE '15' PUZZLE (PRIZE: RIGHT BRONZE MASK)



1. You need to make all of the numbered rows add up to 15. First place the 8 in the upper right corner.
2. Now place the 2 in the lower left corner.
3. Place the 4 in the lower right corner.
4. Finally, place the 6 in the upper left.

TILE PUZZLE (PRIZE: POWER JEWEL)

1. First activate the upper arrow on the right.
2. Now hit the arrow on the right.
3. Finally select the upper arrow on the left.
4. This gives you a power jewel that you can use to increase your vitality.

2. Now hit the lower arrow on the right to complete the puzzle.

TAKAJO (RETURN PATH)

GUARDIAN PUZZLE (PRIZE: NONE)

Remember the torn Four Guardians Artwork you picked up in Yagyu? Have a look at it and check the colours and positions of the four figures. All you need to do now is examine the chest and slide the disks around to match the artwork. When all four guardians are in the correct position the puzzle is complete.

triangle on the bottom row.

2. Finally, highlight the middle arrow on the right side to complete the puzzle.

SPIKED WALLED ROOM (PRIZE: NONE)

In the room with the ominous looking spikes covering the left and right walls take a second before pulling the lever. An image will flash up showing the correct placement of the three Nobunaga statues you have in your inventory (this changes randomly). Place them carefully into the correct holes, as a mistake will move the spiked walls in. Four wrong moves and you'll be squished.

YAGYU

TILE PUZZLE (PRIZE: POWER JEWEL)

1. This one needs to be completed in two moves. First activate the right arrow on the top row to slide the tiles down.

THE SWAMP

TILE PUZZLE (PRIZE: WIND ORB SWORD SPECIAL MOVE)

1. Two moves are required for this puzzle. The first of which is to select the far left

ONI'S PLACE

TILE PUZZLE (PRIZE: TANEGASHIMA)

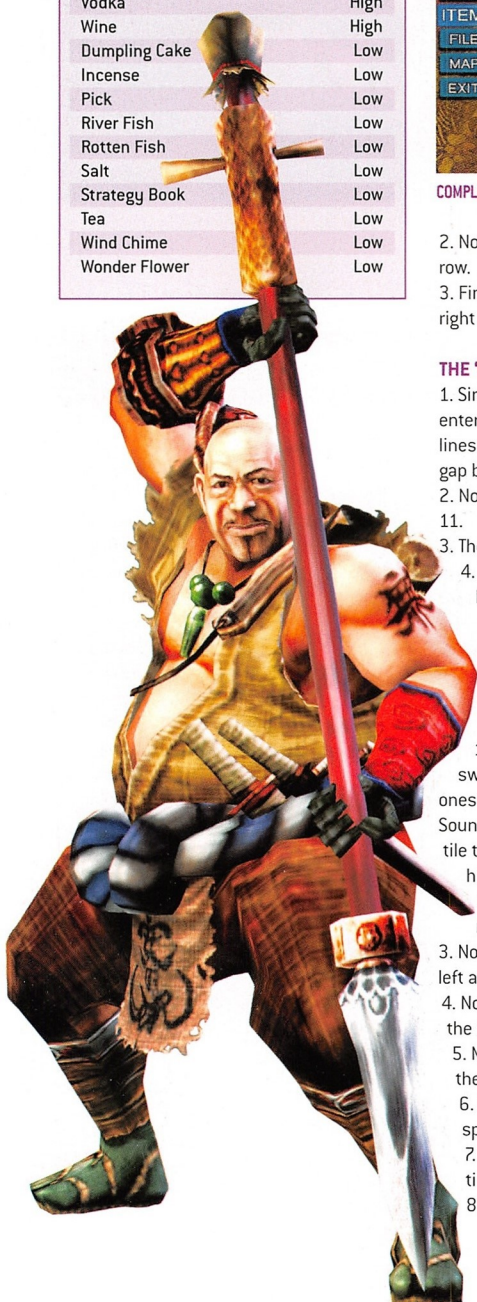
1. You have three moves to do this puzzle in. First activate the top arrow on the left side.

CHEATS AND SECRET MODES

GAME MODE / SPECIAL OPTION	WHAT IS IT?	UNLOCKED BY
EASY MODE	Enemies are much weaker	Die three times in a row
HARD MODE	Enemies twice as strong	Complete Normal mode
CRITICAL MODE	Damage to enemies only caused by 'Flash Attacks'	Clear 'Team Oni' Mode
KICK ASS MODE	Start the game tooled up to the max. You're as hard as nails!	Complete Hard Mode
JUBEI'S NEW TOGS	A nice leather all in one number. Cool!	Complete the game with Onimusha rank and collect the 'Fashionable Goods' from the Purple Phantom Realm [Lv 21]
OYU'S NEW TOGS	A rather revealing number. Cleavage city!	You need 100% scenario completion for every character
TEAM ONI MODE	Clear 20 enemy filled rooms with any character	Beat the game
THE MAN IN BLACK MODE	Mini game. Collect 20 pieces of film in order to watch FMV	Beat the game
MIND TWISTER MODE FROM THE GAME.	54 puzzle boxes for you to work out.	Beat the game with all 18 Artworks
SCENARIO ROUTE	Gives you a map of your game route.	Beat the game
ONIMUSHA 3 TRAILER	A sneaky peak of something rather good.	Beat the game

EKEI

GIFT	GOODWILL POINTS
Ashura Garment	High
Blue Parrot	High
Broken Bell	High
Calligraphy Kit	High
Crown	High
Crystal Ball	High
Folding Fan	High
Fresh Fish	High
Fudo Leg Guard	High
Fur Skin	High
Gold Coin	High
Gold Egg	High
Gold Chick	High
Gold Chicken	High
Grilled Fish	High
Halberd	High
History Book Vol. 1	High
Loaded Dice	High
Love Potion	High
Melon	High
Naughty Novel	High
Pickled Plum	High
Sake From Kaga	High
Stamina Drink	High
Talzo Mandala	High
Telescope	High
Tengu Mask	High
Vodka	High
Wine	High
Dumpling Cake	Low
Inense	Low
Pick	Low
River Fish	Low
Rotten Fish	Low
Salt	Low
Strategy Book	Low
Tea	Low
Wind Chime	Low
Wonder Flower	Low



This is nice...

WILL YOU BE MY FRIEND? Choose carefully who you want by your side.



COMPLETISTS Collect all 10 volumes of the History Book.



EH? The Wonder Flower makes people forget any bad vibes.



HOW DO I GET THAT? Look for secret levers and buttons.

2. Now press the middle arrow on the top row.
3. Finally, highlight the bottom arrow on the right side. Puzzle complete.

THE '34' PUZZLE (PRIZE: GOLDEN KEY)

1. Similar to the '15' puzzle you need to enter the numbers at the bottom to create lines totalling 34. First, enter the 7 into the gap between the 6 and 9.
2. Now place the Low between the 8 and 11.
3. The 1 slots in the top left corner.
4. The 13 pops in on the bottom row. Finally, with one space remaining, place the final '4' tile to complete the puzzle.

DIAMOND / CIRCLE TILE PUZZLE (PRIZE: NONE)

1. The idea behind this puzzle is to swap the diamond tiles with the circular ones to match the pattern along the top. Sound simple? First select the left circle tile to move it to the left. Now select the highlighted diamond tile.
2. The next step is to move the remaining highlighted circle tile.
3. Now select the diamond tile on the far left and move it to the centre.
4. Now move the highlighted circle tile to the left.
5. Move the diamond tile on the right to the space on the left.
6. Move the circle tile on the right to the space to the left of it.
7. Now move the highlighted diamond tile over to the far right.
8. Select the circle tile on the right and

- switch it into the space to the left of it.
9. Now shift the diamond tile on the left next to the other diamond tile.
10. Finally shift the circle tile to complete the puzzle.

GIFU CASTLE: STAR TOWER

TILE PUZZLE (PRIZE: TALISMAN)

1. First select the top right arrow to slide the tiles down.
2. Now activate the bottom arrow on the right side.
3. The arrow on the left of the bottom row is the next one to select.
4. Now select the top arrow on the left-hand side.
5. Activate the left arrow on the top row.
6. Choose the bottom arrow on the left to complete the puzzle.

PUZZLE SOLUTIONS CONTINUED

GIFU EAST AREA

TILE PUZZLE ONE (PRIZE: MAGIC JEWEL)

1. Select the middle arrow on the left.
2. Now select the left arrow of the top row.
3. Activate the right-hand arrow in the right-hand row.

TILE PUZZLE TWO (PRIZE: MAGIC JEWEL)

1. Select the middle arrow on the left-hand side.
2. Now activate the arrow on the left of the top row.
3. Finally select the top triangle on the right-hand side to complete the puzzle.

TILE PUZZLE THREE (PRIZE: DOKOUTSUI SECRET)

1. First select the bottom arrow on the right-hand row.
2. Activate the arrow on the right of the bottom row.
3. Stay on the bottom row and select the arrow on the right.
4. Hop back over to the row on the right to activate the middle arrow.
5. Select the middle arrow on the bottom row.
6. Finally, activate the top arrow on the right.

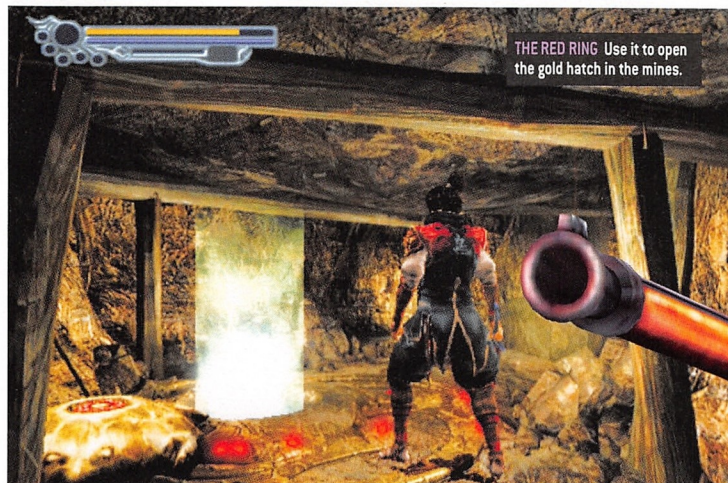
THE DEMON CAVE

TILE PUZZLE ONE (PRIZE: POWER JEWEL)

1. Select the left arrow on the bottom row.
2. Now choose the bottom arrow on the left-hand side.
3. Activate the arrow on the right side of the bottom row.
4. Next, choose the bottom arrow on the right-hand side.
5. Finally, activate the left arrow on the top row to complete the puzzle.

TILE PUZZLE TWO (PRIZE: POWER JEWEL)

1. First, select the arrow on the left side of the bottom row.
2. Move to the left side and select the lower arrow.
3. Move back down to the bottom row and click the arrow on the right.
4. Hop over to the right-hand side and select the arrow on the bottom.
5. Finally use the left arrow on the top row to complete the puzzle.



GIFU EAST AREA (RIVER)

DIAMOND / CIRCLE TILE PUZZLE (PRIZE: NONE)

1. Move the circle tile on the far left one space.
2. Select the triangle tile on the right and shift it to the right.
3. Move the circle tile on the left.
4. Select the middle diamond tile and move it.
5. Move the leftmost circle tile again.
6. Choose the diamond tile on the left and move it to the right, over the circle tile.
7. Select the remaining circle tile and shift it to the left.
8. Move the middle diamond back to the left.
9. Select the circle tile on the right and shift it.
10. Now move the diamond tile on the right to the right.
11. Select the middle tile and shift it over to the right.
12. Now move the middle circle tile.
13. The diamond tile on the left is the next one to move.
14. Move the circle tile in the middle.
15. Re-select the middle diamond tile and shift it left.
16. Move the circle tile on the far right.
17. Now shift the available diamond tile.
18. You then select the diamond tile in the middle.
19. Now move the diamond tile on the left. Almost there!
20. Shift the circle tile on the far right.
21. Select the diamond tile on the left to complete the puzzle.

ONI'S PLACE (RETURN)

TILE PUZZLE ONE (PRIZE: MAGIC JEWEL)

1. Move to the arrow set on the right and activate the top arrow.
2. Stick to the right row and select the bottom arrow.
3. Move up to the top row and select the left-hand arrow.
4. Finally, choose the bottom arrow of the left-hand row.

TILE PUZZLE TWO (PRIZE: POWER JEWEL)

1. First select the bottom arrow of the right-hand row.
2. Move down to the bottom row and select the right arrow.
3. Head up to the top row and pick the left arrow.
4. Swing around to the left-hand row and activate the top arrow.
5. Finally, select the middle arrow of the top row.

FINAL PUZZLE

TILE PUZZLE (PRIZE: POWER JEWEL)

1. Use the middle arrow of the right-hand row.
2. Move up to the top set and activate the middle arrow.
3. Select the bottom arrow of the right-hand row.
4. Choose the middle arrow of the bottom row.
5. Switch over to the left side arrows and select the middle one.
6. Finally, use the right arrow of the top row to complete the puzzle.

MAGOICHI

GIFT	ALLIANCE POINTS	GIFT	ALLIANCE POINTS
Ancient Documents	High	Chick	Medium
Black Beer	High	Chicken	Medium
Blue Parrot	High	Chinese Fiddle	Medium
Brown Egg	High	Crown	Medium
Conch Shell	High	Egg	Medium
Deer Antlers	High	Flute	Medium
Fancy Paper	High	Fork	Medium
Gold Chick	High	Fresh Fish	Medium
Gold Chicken	High	Frog	Medium
Goralshinki	High	Gold Egg	Medium
Green Parrot	High	Grilled Fish	Medium
All History Books	High	Hair Oil	Medium
Melon	High	Mirror	Medium
Music Box	High	Naughty Novel	Medium
Old Coin	High	Oolong Tea	Medium
Pair Ring	High	Plant Book	Medium
Pickles	High	Potassium Nitrate	Medium
Pipe	High	Rotten Fish	Medium
Pirates Costume	High	Telescope	Medium
Pocket Watch	High	Vodka	Medium
Sake From Kaga	High	Cloth	Low
Strategy Book	High	History Book Vol. 1 - 10	Low
Taiheiki	High	Playing Cards	Low
Tale Of The Heiki	High	River Fish	Low
Western Boots	High	Salt	Low
Abacus	Medium	Silver Coin	Low
Analects of Confucious	Medium	Stamina Drink	Low
Brown Chicken	Medium	Tea	Low
Calligraphy Kit	Medium	Wonder Flower	Low



GAME BOSSES

You want to take on the big boys, eh? Your path through the game is protected by many tough demons. Here's a run down of all major baddies you'll face on the way.

GINGHAMPHATTS

HEALTH POINTS

- EASY: 8000
- NORMAL: 10000
- HARD: 13500

The key to defeating this guy is timing. His attacks are pretty easy to block as he takes a long time to pull his weapon back to strike. This allows you to rock in and strike Ginghamphatts three or four times. As he swings his weapon back, hit and hold block. Repeat the process to chip away at his energy. The attack you really need to watch out for is his jumping slam. He grunts before he takes off so as soon as you hear it, pull back. A series of magic attacks will also help to see this guy off. Once one of your allies appears, hold back and let him attack Ginghamphatts. Soon enough a few souls will emerge, allowing you to absorb them and top up your health. Now simply run in and finish Ginghamphatts off.

GOGANDANTESS

HEALTH POINTS

- EASY: 6500
- NORMAL: 8500
- HARD: 13000

Switch to your Hyoujin-Yari and prepare for battle. You are actually unable to defeat Gogandantess, but you do need to keep him at bay for a while. He has an impenetrable shield that you need to strike about 20 times. The Hyoujin-Yari is the best



THE BOW You won't use it much, but it does have its uses.

weapon for the job as it keeps this guy at bay. Keep block held down to allow you to side step Gogandantess' charged attacks. Watch for the red glow of his sword and prepare to dodge. Keep pummeling him with attacks and eventually you'll get the chance to run away, via a cut-scene.

GINGHAMPHATTS (FIGHT 2)

HEALTH POINTS

- EASY: 10000
- NORMAL: 14000
- HARD: 18000

Enter this fight with plenty of magic energy and you should be ok. Many of his attacks are similar to the first confrontation and you can block his axe swipes. You need to be wary of his axe and punch combination move as you can block the axe, but your defence is knocked out and the punch can connect. Use magic attacks to draw souls from Ginghamphatts and begin powering up your Oni special. If you can unleash some Oni shots then your job is made a whole lot easier. As before, leap in for a hit then block. Repeat the process as long as you can. Again, Ginghamphatts will begin to leap around. As soon as you see him ready to leap, get ready to move. This time though, he disappears into the trees and you can guess his landing spot by the leaves that float down. Eventually, depending on your recent gift giving skills, a support character runs in to help you. Let them whack the hell out of the beast whilst you absorb the souls that are drawn out. Keep your distance and Ginghamphatts falls.

JUJUDORMAH

HEALTH POINTS

- EASY: 5500
- NORMAL: 7500



MAGIC FOUNTAINS These vital magic top-ups need finding.

HARD: 11000

This fight is a little tricky due to the fact that this demon releases few souls. This means that you need to watch your energy carefully. Luckily nearly all of Jujudormah's attacks are blockable. First unleash all of your magic attacks into her to knock chunks off her energy. Once you have run out of magic, switch weapons and use all the magic from that one. Repeat this process until all of your weapons have dried up. Now switch back to the Hyoujin-Yari and carefully execute some long-range attacks. Keep your distance as if Jujudormah knocks you to the floor she'll stomp on you. This is perhaps her most dangerous attack, so if you can avoid being floored you should manage to finish her off quite easily. Don't be fooled by her brolly jab either, you can block the initial attack, but the brolly flings open. With the block held down, quickly edge around to avoid the second blow.

Also listen out for her cackle. When you hear this hold block, as a flurry of energy shots will come your way. Getting hits in on her is a little tricky so let her follow you around the table and when she pauses, lunge at her. Repeat this process to finish the evil old bag off.

GOGANDANTESS (FIGHT 2)

HEALTH POINTS

- EASY: 6500
- NORMAL: 8500
- HARD: 13000

Like the first battle you are unable to actually

OYU

GIFT	GOODWILL POINTS	GIFT	GOODWILL POINTS
Ardarga	High	Deer Antlers	Medium
Cameo	High	Fancy Paper	Medium
Comb	High	Frog	Medium
Crystal Ball	High	Hair Oil	Medium
Flowers	High	History Book Vol. 2	Medium
Fork	High	Incense	Medium
Fur Skin	High	Kaleidoscope	Medium
Glass	High	Melon	Medium
Gold Egg	High	Oolong Tea	Medium
Gold Chick	High	Persian Rug	Medium
Gold Chicken	High	Pickled Plum	Medium
Gradius	High	Plant Book	Medium
Hair Ornament	High	Pocket Watch	Medium
Love Potion	High	Wasabi	Medium
Mirror	High	Wine	Medium
Music Box	High	Abacus	Low
Pair Ring	High	Black Beer	Low
Phirangi	High	Chalk	Low
Raw Fish	High	Cloth	Low
Red Parrot	High	Copper Coin	Low
Rogue	High	Dice	Low
Scarf	High	Egg	Low
Silver Armour	High	Folding Fan	Low
Silver Coin	High	Gourd	Low
Tea	High	History Book Vol. 5	Low
Textile Fabrics	High	Lemon	Low
Wind Chime	High	Pickles	Low
Beetle	Medium	Pound Cake	Low
Black Pills	Medium	River Fish	Low
Brown Egg	Medium	Salt	Low
Chick	Medium	Telescope	Low
Confetti	Medium	Wonder Flower	Low



defeat Gogandantess. This time though you can actually get some nice hearty hits in on this guy. You'll recognise some nasty attacks though, perhaps the worst being his unblockable sword attack. Luckily this can be pre-empted by keeping an eye out for the red glow. A simple side-step will avoid this. As before, lay into him as much as you can. If you try to avoid him you'll end up in trouble. His unblockable attacks can be countered so do not let up. Magic attacks send Gogandantess off balance so use them as much as you can. If you see a sudden bright spark, hit the block button to deflect the energy shot he fires out. After about 40 hits the battle ends so get them in quick.

BAGUWASSHA

HEALTH POINTS

- EASY: 3000
- NORMAL: 5000
- HARD: 7000

All of Baguwassha's attacks are unblockable so this battle can prove tough. The order of the day is distance. Keep away from this guy. Use long distance weapons to get some sneaky hits in, making sure you are ready to move back as soon as you strike. Luckily Oyu has some daggers to throw and these can prove vital. Do not get caught in a corner as this can mean certain death. Always make sure you have room to side-step any blows thrown your way. If you get knocked to the floor, Baguwassha will strike you as soon as you stand. Take this battle slow, getting hits in as and when you can. Don't be too hasty as one false move can cause you certain death.

BAGUWASSHA (FIGHT 2)

HEALTH POINTS

- EASY: 3000
- NORMAL: 5000
- HARD: 7000

As Ekei you face this big red fellow. Begin by slinging all of your Charms at this guy. As before, Baguwassha's attacks cannot be blocked so you need to follow similar tactics. The best tactic is to prevent this guy from getting any attacks in. The way to do this is to knock him back using your secret attack. Pummel him with this to throw Baguwassha off balance and stop him from attacking. If you take a hit, back off and repeat the

process. If you can continue to throw Baguwassha off key > with special attacks then this guy is seen off pretty easily.

BAGUWASSHA (FIGHT 3)

HEALTH POINTS

- EASY: 3000
- NORMAL: 5000
- HARD: 7000

Baguwassha has a few little friends alongside him to add to the fray. Back up against the wall and shoot the small guys as Baguwassha approaches. Once clear, charge your weapon and fire off your more powerful shots at the big red beast. This throws him back, allowing you to switch back to your less powerful shots to clear the oncoming smaller enemies. Again, as soon as Baguwassha begins his journey towards you again, charge up and let loose. Repeat this process four or five times to win the fight.

GOGANDANTESS (FIGHT 3)

HEALTH POINTS

- EASY: 6500
- NORMAL: 8500
- HARD: 13,000

This time around it's a fight to the death. Luckily there is a nifty trick to aid you. Quickly open your inventory and select the Sacred Flute. Use it to de-activate Gogandantess' shield. That thing has been a pain in previous fight, but with it gone you can pummel this guy with all your might. Magic works wonders here so unleash all you have, making sure you watch out for his red glow attack. Remember, it's unblockable so get ready to dodge. Again, range helps avoid those attacks and if you keep Gogandantess at bay and keep the pressure on he soon falls.

GYARAN QUEEN

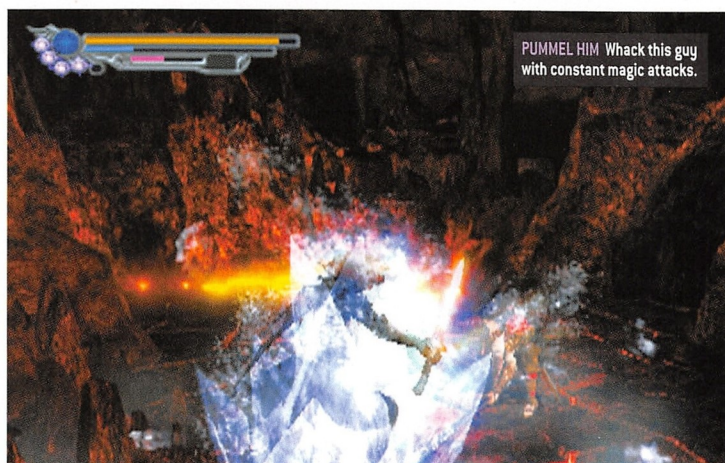
HEALTH POINTS

- EASY: 5000
- NORMAL: 8000
- HARD: 13500

Perch on the roof ledge and block to avoid the first onslaught of mini Gyarans. Take them out and absorb their souls before turning your attention to the queen. Use the fire arrows and the bow to get as many shots



A RIGHT PAIN This guy attacks you on various occasions.



PUMMEL HIM Whack this guy with constant magic attacks.

into the queen as you can as she approaches you. Now switch to another weapon to attack as she spins down to you. Keep the magic attacks flowing and this slimy blob soon falls.

END GAME BOSS: GINGHAMPHATTS

HEALTH POINTS

- EASY: 9000
- NORMAL: 12000
- HARD: 15000

Hint: Get the Rekka-Ken sword from the Purple Phantom Realm.

There's a rather cool trick here, which makes your life a lot easier (and last a lot longer!) Ginghamphatts is extremely generous with his souls. This allows you to keep all of your weapons' magic power topped up. How? To do this you need to continually rotate your weapons. Use one magic attack then switch to the next weapon. Use one magic attack on that weapon then switch to the next. As long as you absorb all of the souls that stream from the big fellow all of your weapons will stay pretty much maxed up for a while.

Once your magic is eventually used up switch to the Rekka-Ken sword. Attack as much as you can until Ginghamphatts separates. Yep, he splits. His upper body and lower body now go for the dual attack. As the upper body flies around use, use the Rekka-Ken to floor it. Now bombard it with attacks. The lower half is a soul packed piece of meat so don't forget about it. It'll power up your sword for when the upper body is on the ground. Just keep your tools

powered up and that torso on the ground to see this battle through.

END GAME BOSS: NOBUNAGO

HEALTH POINTS

- EASY: 7300 – 11000
- NORMAL: 10000 – 15000
- HARD: 14000 – 20000

Hint: Ensure you have tonnes of magic and the purple necklace as this reduces the amount of magic used.

Whilst Nobunago is on the ground for the first half of the fight make the most of your magic attacks. Pummel him with all you have got. The Rekka-Ken is perfect for this as it can cause some serious damage and allows you to hit Nobunago as he is floating around, which he soon will be. Keep on the move, striking when you can. Occasionally Nobunago will stop to recharge. You can't damage him whilst he does, but if you hit him he releases souls and these are vital to keep your magic ability up.

Nobunago uses a string of elemental attacks, thunder, fire, earth, ice and wind. You can see each one charge so be prepared. Use the tips below to avoid them.

THUNDER: Avoid the light spots, as this is where the thunderbolts will strike down. The easiest way to do this is to pause until the spots do, then move.

FIRE: Nobunago plummets to the ground and blasts a line of fire at you. As he dives,



STRANGE GLOW This glowing sphere is the Faith Orb.



REMEMBER THE EGG? Now it's a chicken, but leave it for now.



LOVE POTION The next gift you'll give will be rewarded.

hop back and use a magic attack. With perfect timing the magic attack will make you immune to the fire. With a bit of luck, it may even hit Nobunaga.

EARTH: Stand still as Nobunaga conjures up some meteors. Stand still and wait for the meteors to zip towards you. Now move as fast as you can. Timing is vital here.

ICE: As you see the glow of ice stand still. Nobunaga will then dive towards you. As he begins his descent, move out of the way. If you miss-time this, he'll freeze you and knock you about a bit.

WIND: Avoid his tornado by running around the edge of the room. Keep on the move as

this windy nightmare chases you around the room. After what seems like an eternity, the wind dries up.

FINAL BATTLE: GOLDEN EVIL STATUE

HEALTH POINTS

- **EASY: 50000**
- **NORMAL: 80000**
- **HARD: 110000**

You have one weapon for this battle and this makes your job a hell of a lot easier. The Oni Cannon is a powerful piece of kit. The Golden Evil Statue also has few attacks and the combination of these makes this end game fight rather simple, when

compared to earlier battles.

It's a simple case of survival. Dodging attacks by hopping left or right and blasting the Golden Evil Statue as you do. The statue has a few attacks and if you know how to avoid these then this battle is pretty much in the bag.

If it begins to come towards you, time your avoidance move to dodge its huge feet. Get caught under these and it can cause considerable damage to you. The statue sometimes blasts a jet of fire as it lurches forward. This can be easy to spot so pre-empt this move to avoid some major burns. As it lumbers towards you blast the hell out of it with the cannon, timing your move out of the way well, only to continue the bombardment from safety.

Similar to Nobunaga's thunder attack, the Statue emits some spots of light. Avoid these like the plague to avoid the huge spikes that it fires out. To avoid the mask attacks, simply run around. The yellow flames that the

statue throws out can be shot with the cannon, blocked or simply avoided. Finally the huge laser beam can be easily avoided by dodging and pegging it to safety.

Now you know how to avoid each attack use any chances you have to unleash some cannon shots. As this is the last fight you should make the most of your health items. Top up whenever you need to. With enough cannon shots the statue falls and the game is complete.

ITEMS

There are literally hundreds of items to collect in the game, but only a few are absolutely vital to your on your quest. If you are having trouble locating a certain item for that frustratingly locked door, then find out what you need for it and check out the location table above. Hopefully, you should be able to locate it now.

KEY ITEMS

VITAL ITEMS	USE	LOCATION
Blue Stone Pole	Used to exit Fog Forest	Blue Phantom Realm
Bronze Mask (Left)	Unlocks Demon Door	Gifu Keep Tower
Charity Orb	Opens door in Mine of Imasho	Back of Yagyu Village
Circle Key	Unlocks door across the Box Convoy	Oni's Place
Faith Orb	Used to power metal horse	Gifu Keep
Four Guardians Art (Left)	Used to solve Four Guardians Puzzle	Jubei's House
Gold Scale	Unlocks Demon Base	Gifu Castle
Great Powder Tube	Used to pass two statue guardians	Demon Cave
Honesty Orb	Used on water creature	Defeat female demon
Mountain Permit	Used to enter Mines of Imasho	Imasho Inn
Nobunaga's Knowledge	Used in Spiked Wall Puzzle	Fog Valley, behind Wind Seal
Purify Charm	Gains you Bronze Mask (Left)	Gifu Keep
Red Ring	Unlocks gold hatch in Imasho Mine	Old man in Imasho Village (After first mine visit)
Red Wedge	Used to enter Red Phantom Realm	Fog Valley
Ring of Takajo	Unlocks puzzle cabinet in Jubei's house	Takajo Cave
Saiga Bomb	Use at first Dragon Head	Yayu Village
Snake Key	Free's Jubei from Gifu Tower	Gifu Castle Fort



MINI TIPS



UNLOCK THE HIDDEN TREASURES WITHIN YOUR GAMES COLLECTION. OR JUST MAKE EVERYTHING A LOT EASIER.

MX SUPERFLY

MASTER CODE

Press **△**, **L1** + **□**, **△**, **L1** + **▷**, **R1** + **▼**, **R1** + **▷**, **START** at the main menu.

ALL CHARACTERS

Press **▷**, **L1** + **▷**, **▼**, **L1** + **□**, **▷**, **△** at the main menu.

ALL BIKES

Press **L2** + **□**, **L1** + **▷**, **L2** + **○**, **L1** + **▼**, **△** at the main menu.

ALL TRACKS

Press **△**, **▷**, **L1** + **R1**, **△** + **○**, **L2** + **○**, **△** at the main menu

250 CC FREESTYLE EVENT

Press **△**, **L1** + **△**, **△**, **L1** + **▷**, **L2** + **▼**, **L1** + **▼** at the main menu.

CAMERON STEELE

Get the "World's Longest Jump" trophy.

SUPERFLY

Get the "Crane's Eye View" trophy.

CUSTOM BEE MOTORCYCLE

Get the "World's Highest Jump" trophy.

CUSTOM PLAYA MOTORCYCLE

Get the "Dominate 125cc Pro Race Season" trophy.

SPECIAL FIRE MOTORCYCLE

Get the "Dominate 250cc Pro Freestyle

Season" trophy.

SPECIAL TIGER MOTORCYCLE

Get the "Dominate 125cc Pro Freestyle Season" trophy.

CUSTOM WATER MOTORCYCLE

Get the "Dominate 250cc Pro Race Season" trophy.

EXTRA TRACK EDITOR BARRIERS

Get the "Dramatic Entrance" trophy.

EXTRA TRACK EDITOR MOVABLE OBJECTS

Get the "Impossible Stoppie" trophy.

EXTRA TRACK EDITOR RAMPS

Get the "Impossible Wheelie" trophy.

BALLOON TOSS MINI-GAME

Get the "Safety First" trophy.



V8 SUPERCARS

IT'S FINALLY OUT... SO CHEAT!

REALISTIC HANDLING

For realistic handling enter **SIM** as a code at the bonus screen.

REALISTIC DAMAGE

For realistic damage enter **DAMAGE** as a code at the bonus screen.



PAC MAN WORLD 2

- Unlock the retro Pac-Man arcade game by collecting 10 tokens
- Unlock the retro Pac-Attack arcade game by collecting 30 tokens
- Unlock the retro Pac-Mania arcade game by collecting 100 tokens
- Unlock the retro Pac-Man arcade game by collecting 180 tokens
- Jukebox option – collect 60 tokens



TEKKEN 4

A UK VERSION IS NOW AVAILABLE, SO WHY NOT UNLOCK ALL THE EXTRAS?

FIGHT AS EDDY GORDO

Successfully complete the game in story mode as Christie Monteiro. Then, highlight Christie and press **△** at the character selection screen.

FIGHT AS MIHARU

Successfully complete the game in story mode as Ling Xiaoyu. Then, highlight Ling Xiaoyu and press **○** at the character selection screen.

FIGHT AS LING XIAOYU IN SCHOOL UNIFORM

Successfully complete the game in story mode as Ling Xiaoyu. Then, highlight Ling Xiaoyu and press **△** at the character selection screen.

FIGHT AS PANDA

Highlight Kuma at the character selection screen, then press **△** or **○**

FIGHT AS VIOLET

Highlight Lee at the character selection screen, then press **○**

DOJO STAGE

Successfully complete the game in Tekken Force mode.

THEATRE MODE

Successfully complete the game in the Story mode.

RANKING PASSWORD

Successfully complete Time Attack, Survival, Tekken Force, or Training mode. Hold **□** + **△** and press **▲** / **▼** to display a password that corresponds to your rank.



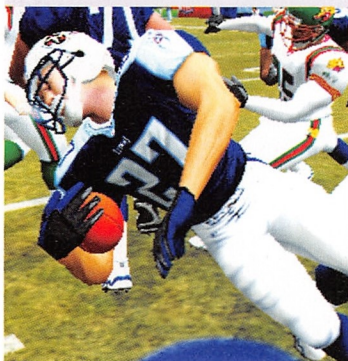
MADDEN 2003

UNLIMITED CREATION POINTS

Go to "Rosters", then choose "Edit Player". Select the players that you want to be rated 99. Go to the attributes, then increase everything.

EASY TOKENS

Play two-minute drill and choose to play four players, all with your profile. Set "Fire" the defence and the Vikings as your teams. Next, use Singleback 4WR All Streaks for touchdowns all day.



UNLOCK CHEERLEADER AND PUMP UP CROWD CARDS

Successfully complete the "Game Situation" challenges in mini-camp mode. The Cheerleader or Pump Up Crowd Cards for the team used will be unlocked.

UNLOCK CHEERLEADER CARDS AND GAME CHEATS

Get a gold rank in any event on the All Pro, Pro and Rookie levels.

UNLOCK DEION SANDERS

Get a gold rank in the DB Swat drill in mini-camp mode under the All-Madden level to unlock the legend.

UNLOCK GALE SAYERS

Get a gold rank in the RB Ground Attack drill in mini-camp mode under the All-Madden level.

UNLOCK MIKE SINGLETARY

Get a gold rank in the LB Chase and Tackle drill in mini-camp mode under the All-Madden level.

MORE MINI TIPS

SILENT SCOPE

PROFESSIONAL CHALLENGE MODE

Hold Trigger at the mode selection screen and highlight "Training" or "Arcade". Keep Trigger held and press **START** (four times). The sound of a gun will confirm correct code entry. The aiming ring and enemy markers will be disabled in this mode.

NIGHT VISION CHALLENGE MODE

Hold Trigger at the mode selection screen and highlight "Training" or "Arcade". Keep Trigger held and press **START** (five times). The sound of a gun will confirm correct code entry. The game will begin at night and require the Night Vision scope. Alternately, press **▲**, **▼**, **◀**, **▶**, **○**, **△** at the mode selection screen.

PROFESSIONAL NIGHT VISION CHALLENGE MODE

Hold Trigger at the mode selection screen and highlight "Training" or "Arcade". Keep Trigger held and press **START** (six times). The sound of a gun will confirm correct code entry. The game will begin at night, with no aiming ring or enemy markers.

CONVERT HEALTH TO TIME

Press **START** to pause game play in arcade mode, then press **▲** (two times), **▼** (two times), **◀**, **▶**, **○**, **△**. The sound of a gun will confirm correct code entry. One half of a life will be converted into five extra seconds. This code can be repeated.

CONVERT TIME TO HEALTH

Press **START** to pause game play in arcade mode, then press **▲**, **▼**, **◀**, **▶**, **○**, **△** (two times), **▲** (two times). The sound of a gun will confirm correct code entry. Five seconds from the timer will be converted to one half of a life. This code can be repeated.

MIRRORED LEVELS

Press **◀** (two times), **▶**, **○**, **△** (two times), **▲**, **▼**, **◀**, **▶**, **○**, **△** at the mode selection screen. The sound of a gun will confirm correct code entry.

FIRST PERSON VIEW

Press **▲** (four times), **▼** (four times) at the mode selection screen. The sound of a

gun will confirm the correct code entry. See things more clearly now!

DISABLE AIMING RING

Press **▶** (three times), **○** at the mode selection screen. The sound of a gun will confirm correct code entry.

DISABLE ENEMY MARKERS

Press **▶** (four times), **◀**, **▶**, **○** at the mode selection screen. The sound of a gun will confirm correct code entry.

DISABLE SCOPE

Press **▶**, **◀**, **○**, **△**, **▶**, **○** at the mode selection screen. The sound of a gun will confirm correct code entry.

LOVE MODE

Press **◀**, **▶**, **○**, **△** at the mode selection screen. The sound of a gun will confirm correct code entry.

TURBO MODE

Press **▼**, **▲**, **◀**, **▶**, **○**, **△** at the mode selection screen. The sound of a gun will confirm the correct code entry.

HIDDEN MODE

Press **▶**, **◀**, **○**, **△** (two times), **▲**, **▼**, **◀**, **▶**, **○**, **△** at the mode selection screen. The sound of a gun will confirm correct code entry.

100 CHALLENGE MODE

Successfully complete all nine Outdoor Shooting Range challenges to unlock 100 Challenge Mode.

EXTRA OPTIONS

Successfully complete the game under any difficulty setting to unlock a real time window and up to eight health points in the options menu. Alternately, accumulate over two hours of game play. Successfully complete the game more than twice under any difficulty level to unlock infinite credits in the credit section of the options menu and +30 in the time limit section. Alternately, accumulate over three hours of game play to unlock the +30 time limit and over five hours for the infinite credits.

ZONE OF THE ENDERS

IT'S OLD, BUT SOME STILL NEED HELP.

FULL HEALTH AND AMMO DURING GAMEPLAY

Pause the game during battle and then press **L1**, **L1**, **L2**, **L2**, **L1**, **R1**, **L1**, **R1**, **R2**, **R1**.

TWO SECRET CHARACTERS AND TWO EXTRA LEVELS IN VERSUS MODE

Beat the game on any difficulty level to unlock two extra characters and levels.



RING OF RED

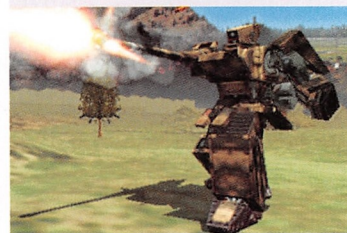
RECOMMENDED AFW RANGES

The AFW1 (Weizeger's) is most effective at medium range.

The four-legged AFWs (John and Ayomo) are most effective at long range.

The AFW2 (Ryogo) is most effective at medium range.

The light AFW is by far the most effective at short range.



WORLD RALLY CHAMPIONSHIP

GREAT BRITAIN CHALLENGE

Choose the "Extra" option at the main menu, then select "Codes". Enter **YJFTRS** as a code.

MONTE CARLO CHALLENGE

Choose the "Extra" option at the main menu, then select "Codes". Enter **L5020K** as a code.

PORTUGAL CHALLENGE

Choose the "Extra" option at the main menu, then select "Codes". Enter **PHY8ZP** as a code.

SWEDEN CHALLENGE

Choose the "Extra" option at the main menu, then select "Codes". Enter **745MJJ** as a code.

ALL BONUS CHALLENGES

Choose the "Extra" option at the main menu, then select "Codes". Enter **GIMMEBONUS** as a code.

HIGH PITCHED COMMENTARY

Choose the "Extra" option at the main

menu, then select "Codes". Enter **HELIUMAID** as a code.

CARS WITH NO CHASSIS

Choose the "Extra" option at the main menu, then select "Codes". Enter **THATSTUPID** as a code.

FLYING CARS IN REPLAYS

Choose the "Extra" option at the main menu, then select "Codes". Enter **FLOATYLIGHT** as a code.

OVERHEAD CAMERA

Choose the "Extra" option at the main menu, then select "Codes". Enter **DOWNBELOW** or **DOWNUNDER** as a code.

REVERSED CAMERA

Choose the "Extra" option at the main menu, then select "Codes". Enter **ONTHECEILING** as a code.

UNDERWATER GRAPHICS

Choose the "Extra" option at the main menu, then select "Codes". Enter **WIBBLYWOBBLY** as a code.

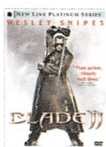


BLADE 2 (2002)



NO ALARMS AND NO SURPRISES: IT'S A FOLLOW UP TO A REASONABLY SUCCESSFUL ACTION FILM ABOUT VAMPIRES. THIS IS REASONABLY SUCCESSFUL TOO. ONLY MORE SO.

- **Starring:** Wesley Snipes
- **Director:** Guillermo del Toro
- **Rated:** MA15+
- **Type:** Horror
- **Distributor:** Village Roadshow



WHAT IS IT WITH

Wesley Snipes? He's starred in plenty of films, cuts a pretty good action hero, is a household name, yet *still* doesn't quite seem properly A-list. Maybe he just doesn't choose *quite* the right films... *Blade 2* isn't going to do anything to spoil this theory. It's thoroughly B-movie stuff, with a

script that (somehow) manages to be sillier than the original, but it's an entertaining actioner nonetheless. Good, but not that good, then. Maybe Wesley needs a new agent.

The *Matrix* references are worn high on this film's sleeve, but you can mostly forgive it as they're pretty impressive – but it's impossible to pardon the unforgivable running time, just three minutes shy of two hours. It must be hard to keep a perspective in Hollywood, but mistaking length for quality seems to be the latest trend, and all we're left with is a weaker, sloppier, more indulgent film and the onset of anal

gangrene. Not nice.

It's always amusing when characters come back from the dead for the sequel, but at least vampirism is a good excuse. Kris Kristofferson is back among the returning cast, once again playing Blade's mentor Whistler, despite ceasing to live in the first one. The pair and their Vampy pals must fight Damaskinos, an undead overlord with an army of super-vampires immune to the old standbys of silver bullets, swords and garlic steaks – queue the leaping martial artistry and crotch-straining kicks.

Stylistically it's very close to the

1998 original, grungily gothic with an oddly cold edge to it all, but some of the creepy horror seems to have bled out somewhere. Despite the dark locations on offer here, nothing quite tops the icy depravity of that white tiled, blood showered dance club of old.



EXTRAS Commentaries from Del Toro (director), Goyer (writer), Frankfurt (producer) and Snipes, documentaries, deleted scenes, art galleries, isolated score, music videos, trailers, more.

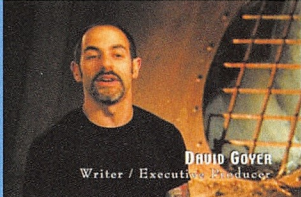


COUNTER CLOCK



01:39:44 Drop the boy
Wesley Snipes kicks the hell out of Luke Goss from Bros. How we've waited to see that. To be fair, though, Goss really isn't bad as Nomak, and *Blade 2*'s kinetic final fight scene delivers all you'd expect. It's still not enough to make up for *I Owe You Nothing* [Ooooh-ohh!], but some things can never be atoned for. Sigh.

EXTRAS, EXTRAS!



FACT-A-VIEWS

A bundle of docs lurking under the suitable heading of 'A Pact In Blood'. They cover Blade's origins, the stuntwork, behind-the-scenes waffling and vampire 'mystique'. Surely it's the patchouli oil?



GONE AND COME

You get a selection of scenes that, for one reason or another, didn't make it to the final cut. An optional commentary is on hand to let you know what that one reason or another was. Which is good.



SCRATCHY PENCIL

This gallery's kind of like the one on Tony Hart's old show, only with a teensy bit more blood, deformity and evil than those kids used to do. You can imagine that shuffly music if you like, too. You goddam fool.

FROM HELL (2001)



- **Starring:** Johnny Depp
- **Director:** Albert/Allen Hughes
- **Rated:** MA15+
- **Type:** Thriller
- **Distributor:** 20th Century Fox



PERHAPS ODDLY for a film called *From Hell*, the Hughes brothers have gone to great lengths to make it pretty.

Heather Graham is unbelievably (literally) gorgeous for a prostitute, Johnny Depp brings his chiselled looks as atonement for his awful cocker-ney accent and Prague is shot with beauty to stand in as 1800s London. Eye candy for boys, girls and architects, then, but nose

candy for film buffs? Nope. The script is flaccid despite the Alan Moore inspiration (from his epic graphic novel) and inevitable host of red herrings, and really, who cares if he was a Free Mason? Isn't being a serial killer bad enough? That said, the film does have a certain charm afforded by its undeniable style, but its lack of substance is disappointing.

[illegible]

EXTRAS Commentaries from Albert/Allen Hughes (directors), deleted scenes, alternative ending, making-of, stills gallery, three featurettes.

■■■■■ ■■■■ ■■■■ ■■■■ ■■■■ ■■■■ ■■■■ ■■■■ ■■■■ ■■■■

THE TIME MACHINE [2002]



- Starring: [Guy Pearce](#)
- Director: [Simon Wells](#)
- Rated: [M](#)
- Type: [Sci fi](#)
- Distributor: [Warners](#)



IT DOESN'T HELP that its star is Mike from *Neighbours*. We're well aware that was years ago, but there's never enough oomph to Guy Pearce's acting to erase the memory – and there's certainly nothing in this film to make a difference now. This is too-smooth, multiplex-friendly DreamWorks piffle through and through, and never even captures the fun or spirit of its camp 60s

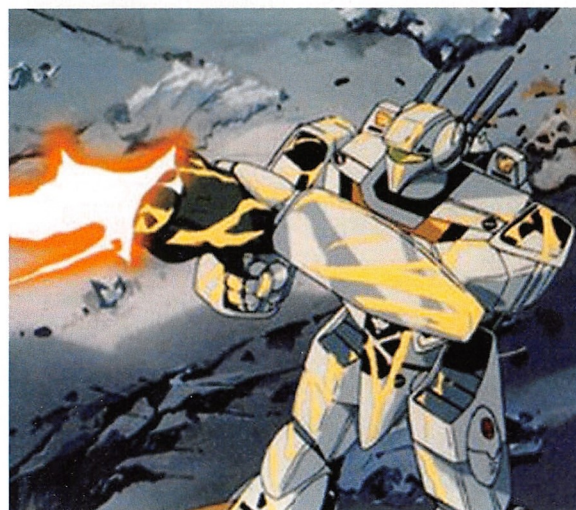
precursor, despite an \$80 million budget. Jeremy Irons provides small relief as leader of the evil underground Morlocks (who prey on the surface-dwelling Eloi of this distant future Earth), but nothing can make up for the deliberate lack of meaning. And all this from HG Wells' great grandson – heinous.

5

EXTRAS Commentaries from Wells (director), Wahrman (film editor), Valdes (producer), Price (SFX) and Scholl (production designer), deleted scene, four behind the scenes featurettes, design gallery, 'The Hunt' animatic.

7

ROBOTECH : MACROSS SAGA (VARIOUS)



- Starring: [Susie London](#)
- Director: [Noboru Ishiguro](#)
- Rated: [G](#)
- Type: [Sci fi](#)
- Distributor: [AV Channel](#)



WHILE THE SERIES IS aging, long forgotten mistakes made in the editing process, highlighted by the DVD resolution, have become blatantly obvious. The hardcore fans amongst us have long ago learnt to look past the flaws and into the story and characters of this epic series. The episodes in the box set are taken directly from the broadcast master from the 80s series. The first thirty-six episodes of

the show have been released on six individual discs and also in three boxed sets each containing an additional extras-disc. *Robotech* was a key factor in the phenomenal success of anime worldwide and is just about to spawn a game produced in its honour.

/ VANESSA MORGAN

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EXTRAS The extras disc is what you're paying the additional bucks for and is easily justifiable with *Codename Robotech*, a feature-length compilation from the first 13 episodes that serves as an introduction into the series.

[illegible]

DVDINSIDER

RUMMAGING THROUGH THE PANTS OF FILM



/TONE DEATH

Anthony Hopkins is Hannibal once again in *Red Dragon*, the first of Thomas Harris's three Lecter tales. Actually, Hannibal's not the big deal here, as fans of Michael Mann's 1986 adaptation *Manhunter* are aware. But you know all this, as we've covered it before. But now the trailer's on the internet – and at least one report from an early screening has this as not just the best Hannibal movie, but the best movie of the year. Better than *Silence of the Lambs*? Here's hoping. Better than *Hannibal*? Here's praying. Check it out at www.reddragonmovie.com



/WATCH THIS

XXX your bag, baby? Somehow missed the hype for *The Transporter*? Then check out www.apple.com/trailers/fox/the_transporter/ The film stars Jason Statham (*Lock, Stock...*) and comes from the pen of Luc Besson (*Leon*). It's over-the-top action like you wouldn't believe – how does dodging a missile with a tea tray sound? Big fights, big explosion, tiny brains, and a sexy oriental chick. What more could you want? It's in cinemas now, so check out the trailer.



/GOOD LINE IN SPIEL

Despite de Caprio being such an arse, *Catch Me If You Can* could be good. His smug brand of smug smugness should work for a con man posing as – among other things – a pilot, a doc and an FBI agent. Christopher Walken pops up as his dad, Tom Hanks chases as a real FBI man and Spielberg directs. As big as *Minority Report*? Find out Christmas day. Unless you're asleep and drunk.

SPIDERMAN [2002]



EVERYONE'S SECOND FAVOURITE COMIC BOOK SUPERHERO SWINGS FROM THE BIG SCREEN TO THE SMALL SCREEN. IN STYLE, TOO.

■ **Starring:** Tobey Maguire
■ **Director:** Sam Raimi
■ **Rated:** M15+
■ **Type:** Action
■ **Distributor:** Columbia TriStar



WITH THE CURRENT resurgence of comic book adaptations to the screen it wais inevitable that Stan Lee's 'long underwear characters' would draw us once again to the narrative of getting the girl, killing the baddies and saving the entire planet.

Spiderman, the 1962 Marvel character, presented a new breed of

hero. Riddled with insecurities and self-doubt, he is human altered by a genetically modified spider bite.

Turning awkward into an art form, Tobey Maguire has created a stereotype for himself through his career. As the geeky honours student, with no athletic ability and an over-developed disposition as an all round nice guy, Maguire is the perfect Peter Parker. One can't help wondering what would have happened if Freddy Prinze Jr had taken the role as Parker and a director of less attitude and passion had steered the film.

Reviving the fun of the genre has been director Sam Raimi's biggest

feat in this film. Capturing the essence of the comic book with bold colours and slow panning shots, Raimi presents a classic story with few liberties taken, the exception being organic web shooters and the Goblins technical suit. The let-down of the film, excluding the tremendous hype, is the Goblin. With such effort put into the movement and direction of Spidey, it's hard to understand why his nemesis is so flat and ridged. While it may of been poor casting in Willem Dafoe (Platoon), the main reason seems to be underdevelopment of the character, common to most comic to film

adaptations. While Spiderman glides through the air with grace, the Goblin seems stunted. This is most notable during the parade when fight effects are laughable and Kirsten Dunst leans off the styrofoam ledge.

However, *Spiderman* is a flashback to when the leotard men were more than just multi-million dollar flops. With the beefcake taking a step back and subtlety a giant lunge forward, this is a film that everyone can enjoy.

/ VANESSA MORGAN

7

EXTRAS

10

COUNTER CLOCK



00:45:51

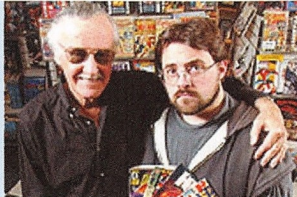
HAVEN'T WE MET BEFORE?

The ultimate 'I told you so' moment when the futile words of an old man bite Peter in the arse. 'With great power, comes great responsibility' and even bigger fuck ups!

EXTRAS, EXTRAS!



Overload the buyer with so many extras that we don't have enough time to forget the hype before the sequel. The two-disc set will provide you with over 10 hours of added footage. With the four-disc Deluxe Collector's pack, overload is ensured.



The one on one between the immortal Stan Lee and Kevin Smith, Monsters, Mutants and Marvel, delves into the minds of two comic creators. Although you get the feeling Smith wants to break into a 'I'm not worthy, I'm not worthy!'



If only we had access to the footage on the documentary floor. With a second crew running 24/7 to bring us all the behind-the-scenes 'unforgettable' footage various featurettes take you through the film making process.

SILICON — CELLULOID

3 TIMESPLITTERS 2 What if it was a film?



THE GAME: An elite troop of marines chase the conveniently evil Timesplitters through a series of time portals in an effort to stop them bringing about the end of the world or some such malarkey. It's irrelevant really, little more than an excuse to stick you in ten diverse environments with instructions to kill an incredibly varied cast of enemies with loads of guns. In single-player it's excellent; in multiplayer it's even better, with four players, bots, and the best set of weapons yet seen in a first-person shooter.

THE FILM: An elite troop of marines chase the conveniently evil Timesplitters through a series of time portals in an effort to stop them bringing about the end of the world or some such malarkey. A good start, but they may have to ditch the whole body possessing aspect in order to give the big name stars more screen time. Ten locations and ten time crystals to retrieve might be difficult to incorporate into a two hour flick and would certainly play havoc with the pacing.

STARRING: If they take the central protagonist route, then a big star like Tom Cruise would be perfect. Otherwise, how about a bunch of nobodies so you're never entirely sure who's going to die and who's going to survive?

DIRECTED BY: Given the number of guns involved, particularly of the dual variety, it's almost certainly got to be John Woo.

WILL IT WORK? Even with a huge budget and a billion script rewrites, it's clear those involved have next to no

chance of making this work. And of course, things get even more confusing when replicating the multiplayer aspect. One can imagine the test screening audience walking out baffled as to why the heroes suddenly start shooting each other, die and come back to life immediately, or all decide to adopt monkeys at the same time.



NEON GENESIS EVANGELION (2002)



■ **Starring:** Amanda Winn Lee
■ **Director:** Anno Hideaki
■ **Rated:** M15+
■ **Type:** Sci-Fi
■ **Distributor:** AV Channel



WITH WEAPONS OF the previous millennium regarded as useless, mankind turns the technology of the Angels inwards with the aim of stopping them in their path. Now the future of humanity rests in the hands of just three. The conclusion to one of the most popular and groundbreaking anime series *Neon Genesis Evangelion: Death & Rebirth* presents the original extraordinary characters in a new

striking and experimental manner. *Death & Rebirth* is a two-part summary of the television series and preparation for the *End of Evangelion*. *Death* is an expansion of the 24 episodes of the series introducing the characters and themes with added footage. *Rebirth* disregards the last two episodes of the series, opting for a more action oriented conclusion. Unusual for anime DVDs, it's loaded with worthwhile extras, too. A great introduction for new fans and a must have for all dedicated fans.

/VANESSA MORGAN

8
EXTRAS
8

JAY AND SILENT BOB STRIKE BACK (2001)



■ **Starring:** Jason Mewes
■ **Director:** Kevin Smith
■ **Rated:** MA15+
■ **Type:** Comedy
■ **Distributor:** Buena Vista



DESPITE THIS MOVIE being a road trip, it never really goes anywhere. Smith deservedly has his fans, and they won't be surprised – or disappointed – by the sex-obsessed and puerile gags here, but first-timers might find the whole thing rather more uneven. The many references to Smith's earlier (often superior) films, such as *Dogma*, *Clerks* and *Mallrats* will go unnoticed, although cameos by

(among many others) Ben Affleck, Jason Biggs and Alanis Morissette are mostly entertaining in their own right. A trip to Tinseltown to halt a film about their comic book alter egos is the tissue-thin excuse for all manner of parodies, but really only half the jokes are worth the time – gross-out comedy is getting old now. And are these guys lead material in the first place?

6
EXTRAS Commentaries from director and stars, deleted scenes, out-takes, trailers, TV spots, stills, music videos, behind the scenes featurette.
7



/BEST OF FRIENDS VOL.3

Distributor: Warner Bros
Will Rachel marry Joey? Will Ross right the wrong? Will Phoebe every make sense? While we wait for the answer to last season's cliffhanger, this box set laden with all your favourite episodes will ease the wait.
Film: 7



/VAMPIRE PRINCESS MIYU

Distributor: AV Channel
School uniforms and demons, unsettling yet cute. Vampire Princess Miyu's is a little girl with an ice-cold stare. She hunts shape-shifting demons (Shinma) and delves into the terrifying business of making friends.
Film: 8



/ARMITAGE III: POLY-MATRIX

Distributor: AV Channel
Armitage: The Third: Polymatrix may leave you with that all too familiar feeling that you've been down this road before. The first anime to be recorded in English, you can't escape the terrible voice acting for the preferable subtitles. With the premise of human vs technology, it's great action packed viewing.
Film: 7



/DRAGONBALL Z SEASON 5

Distributor: AV Channel
Toei keeps the ball rolling with the release of *Dragonball Z* Season 5 on DVD. This dramatically over hyped animation is packed with immense battles and touchy feely moments.
Film: 6

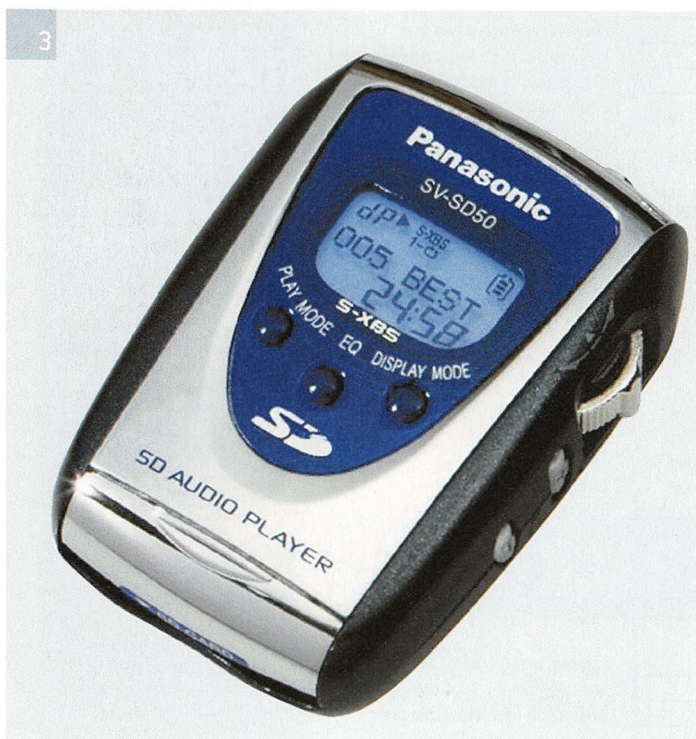
1



2



3



4



STUFF

MAN HAS HARNESSSED THE AWESOME POWER OF PLASTIC TO BRING YOU...

1

THRUSTMASTER DESERT EAGLE

The most complete light gun package we've seen, the Desert Eagle has vibration options, simulated recoil and about a billion buttons. And it's a lovely shade of green too, so your neighbours won't think it's real.

2

DVD ZONE FREE

Fabulous idea this. Simply drop this disc into your PS2 before watching a movie and it circumvents the DVD's region coding. Now you can watch those discs you ordered from the US or Hong Kong or wherever. Tops!

3

PANASONIC SV-SD50S

An attractive shiny necklace for her or a small mp3 player for him, this new Panasonic SD card player is small enough to dangle from a cord. Cord supplied. Best keep it in a pocket, though – no one likes a technology bragger.

4

LOGITECH CORDLESS

Another fabulous idea, though the execution is not quite the success it ought to be. The pad itself is too heavy thanks to 4 AA batteries, while the buttons are inferior to the DualShock's. Still, you can play on the bog.

INCOMING!

GAMES CURRENTLY WINGING THEIR WAY TO PS2

TITLE	PUBLISHER	TYPE
NOVEMBER		
007: Nightfire	Electronic Arts	Shooter
Batman: Dark Tomorrow	Acclaim	Action Adventure
Black & Bruised	Vivendi	Fighting
Dark Angel	Vivendi	Action
Delta Force: Land Warrior	Electronic Arts	Shooter
Dragonball Z	Infogrames	Fighting
Dynasty Warriors Tactics	THQ	Strategy
ET: Return to the Green Planet	Ubisoft	Adventure
Ghost Recon	Ubisoft	Action Strategy
Gungrave	Activision	Shooter
Halloween	Take2	Adventure
Harry Potter: Chamber of Secrets	Electronic Arts	Adventure
Hot Wheels Velocity X	THQ	Racing
Disney's Jungle Book	Ubisoft	Action Adventure
Kingdom Hearts	Sony	RPG
LOTR: Fellowship of the Ring	Vivendi	RPG
Lord of the Rings: The Two Towers	Electronic Arts	Action
Marvel vs Capcom 2	THQ	Fighting
Minority Report	Activision	Action
Monster Jam	Ubisoft	Action
NBA Live 2003	Electronic Arts	Sports
Ratchet & Clank	Sony	Platformer
Red Faction 2	THQ	Shooter
Robocop	Interplay	Shooter
Rocky	Activision	Fighting
Run Like Hell	Interplay	Action Adventure
Scorpion King	Vivendi	Action Adventure
Star Wars: Bounty Hunter	Electronic Arts	Shooter
Star Wars: Clone Wars	Electronic Arts	Action
Star Wars: Jedi Knight 2	Activision	Shooter
Superman: Shadow of Apokolips	Infogrames	Action Adventure
Taz Wanted	Infogrames	Platformer
The Sims	Electronic Arts	Strategy
Tiger Woods PGA Tour 2003	Electronic Arts	Sports
Tom & Jerry: War of the Whiskers	Ubisoft	Action
Tomb Raider: Angel of Darkness	Infogrames	Action Adventure
Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 4	Activision	Sports
Total Immersion Racing	Vivendi	Racing
Ty the Tasmanian Tiger	Electronic Arts	Platformer
World Rally Championship 2	Sony	Racing
Wreckless	Activision	Racing
WWE Smackdown! Shut Your Mouth	THQ	Fighting
X-Men: Next Dimension	Activision	Fighting

DECEMBER		
Alex Ferguson's Player Manager	Ubisoft	Sports
Auto Modellista	THQ	Racing
BMX XXX	Acclaim	Sports
Kingdom Hearts	Sony	Action RPG
Legends of Wrestling	Acclaim	Fighting
Primal	Sony	Action Adventure
Reign of Fire	THQ	Action
Simpsons Skateboarding	Electronic Arts	Sports
Spyro: Enter the Dragonfly	Vivendi	Platformer
The Getaway	Sony	Action Adventure
Vexx	Acclaim	Platformer

JANUARY		
Gladiator Wrestling	Electronic Arts	Fighting
Haven: Call of the King	Acclaim	Action Adventure
State of Emergency Platinum	Take2	Action
Sword of the Samurai	Ubisoft	Fighting

FEBRUARY		
Blood Rayne	Vivendi	Shooter
Disney's Jungle Book	Ubisoft	Action Adventure
Malice	Vivendi	Platformer



'ARDCORE' Giving 50 points for cameramen wasn't smart



'SMOKIN' Lets see if this Mercedes bends

DIRECT HIT!
RUN LIKE HELL
Distributor: Vivendi
Type: Action Adventure



It's been in development for years. One PSW staffer recalls seeing an early tech demo at E3 way back in 2000 when it was a PC game. Things have changed somewhat since then, most notably ditching the *Dragon's Lair*-esque running bits (hence the title) in favour of a far more familiar survival horror mechanic. We'll find out next month if the design change was the right one to make.



DIRECT HIT!
MALICE
Distributor: Vivendi
Type: Platformer



Also in development for ages, Malice has been through some design changes of its own. Originally intended as an Xbox launch title, this steampunk platformer has slipped and slipped and slipped, jumping onto PS2 in the mean time. Early code suggests poor framerate issues and some very weird puzzles. Still, Gwen Stefani does the girl's voice. Which is nice.



inform

The Official Australian Games Chart

Compiled by Inform in association with IEAA

W/E 6 October 2002

TOP 20

Best Selling Full Price PlayStation2 Games (over \$50)

1	▲	V8 Supercars	Racing
2	▼	AFL Live 2003	Sports
3	▲	Grand Theft Auto 3	Adventure
4	▼	Tekken 4	Action
5	▼	Conflict Desert Storm	Action
6	◆	Medal Of Honor: Frontline	Action
7	★	Madden NFL 2003	Sports
8	▼	Stuntman	Simulator
9	★	Jak & Daxter Precursor Legacy	Adventure
10	▲	Final Fantasy X	RPG
11	▲	Crash Band 5: Wrath Of Cortex	Adventure
12	▲	Gran Turismo 2002 Concept	Racing
13	▼	MX Superfly	Racing
14	★	Blade 2	Adventure
15	★	The Thing	Adventure
16	★	Simpsons Road Rage	Racing
17	▼	Turok Evolution	Action
18	▼	Metal Gear Solid 2	Adventure
19	▼	Commandos 2	Strategy
20	▼	Spider-Man: The Movie	Adventure

★ New Entry ◆ Non Mover ▲ Up from last week ▼ Down from last week

Charts can be viewed at
www.informbd.com.au as part of



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ON THE DVD



WELCOME

I never can say goodbye boy, no, no, I never can say goodbye. Just when you think you've seen everything the PSW DVD has to offer I return with a little shiny, rotating disc of gaming bliss, bulging with even more world

first, must see, jaw-dropping, retina-searing, tube-blowing visual nuggets from the world that is PS2. We've gone to extraordinary lengths to bring you these exclusives. From hounding execs and kidnapping pets to playing games throughout the night to reveal the best bits they try to keep hidden away and getting true gaming experts in to make each title look better than the developers themselves ever dreamed. I don't just wear this look for nothing. I'm proud of this DVD. After nurturing it through to completion each month it becomes a part of me, that I want to share with you.

/ GRAHAM SMITH DISC EDITOR



● GRAND THEFT AUTO: VICE CITY IT'S IN THE STOP PRESS SECTION

At last. It's about time we all got a look at the most sought after game on PS2. Those people at Rockstar are tighter than a pair of spandex jeans when it comes to letting anyone have a look at the follow up to arguably the best game on PS2. It's certainly the game we've played the most anyway.

They don't want anyone seeing their prize asset until it's sexier than Bananarama in bathing costumes. Unfortunately they didn't account for our persistence. When we want something this bad there's absolutely no stopping us. Nobody has set eyes on this game until now. Please, there's no

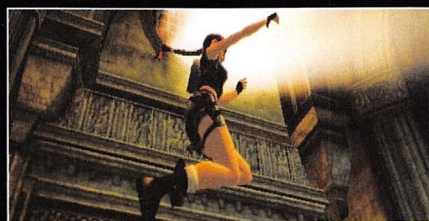
need to thank us. Just doing our job. Now, prepare for a life changing experience. Where *GTA3* took up a large portion of your life, this follow up is set to consume your entire existence. It looks that good. But how does it compare to *The Getaway*, you might wonder? See for yourself...



● JAMES BOND 007 IN...NIGHTFIRE

IT'S IN THE STOP PRESS SECTION

Die Another Day is just about to appear on big screens all over the country and *Nightfire* will soon be clogging the shelves of gaming emporiums nationwide. It would be uncanny if it wasn't planned in advance with utter precision. Out you pour from your cinematic sojourn full of adrenalin with no henchmen to beat the crap out of or no damsel to shag. But not if you've bagged yourself a copy of *Nightfire*! It's got enough guns, goons, babes, crackpots, cars, gadgets, snow and stockings to keep the man himself shaken and stirred until his next conquest – love life invigoration not included. Check out the latest sneak peek at Bond's second PS2 outing and flex those trigger fingers. Like a greatest hits collection it's gonna feature all of the best bits from all of his films rolled into an entirely new tale. So if you've seen the film before you play it won't help you one little bit. Well apart from knowing that everyone not wearing suspenders needs a bullet between the eyes and blokes stroking cats want to rule the world. Naturally.



● TOMB RAIDER

IT'S IN THE NEWS SECTION

The wait for Lara to return has been long enough now to make us forget all about that last batch of lazy cash-ins and hanker for some more of that Croft quality that the PS2 has been crying out for. No action-adventure yet has come close to matching the sheer genius of her first couple of games. The PS2 needs this game. We need this game. This new footage from the recent ECTS exhibition will have to do for now. Enjoy her charms.



● THE GETAWAY

IT'S IN THE STOP PRESS SECTION

We couldn't believe our mince pies when we finally got to play *The Getaway*. To see this in action on your custard is a sight to behold. Your north and south will drop to the floor when you realise just how authentic every drum in London is. Watch this then nip down the battle cruiser and tell your chinas that we've finally got a *GTA* rival, cockney style. Then crack open a couple of aristos and toast the biggest game of 2003.

INDEX

EXCLUSIVE: WWE Smackdown! Shut Your Mouth, Burnout 2: Point of Impact, Red Faction 2. **STOP PRESS:** World Rally Championship 2 Extreme, Primal, The Getaway, Downhill Racer, Treasure Planet, F1 2002, James Bond 007 in...Nightfire, Mortal Kombat: Deadly Alliance, Defender, Haven: Call of the King, Myst 3: Exile, XIII, GTA: Vice City.
NEWS: Evolution Skateboarding, Rocky, Lord of the Rings: The Two Towers, Wreckless, X-Men: The Next Dimension, Superman: Shadow of Apokolips, Terminator Dawn of Fate, Dr Muto, Tomb Raider: Angel of Darkness. **PREVIEWS:** Malice, Soul Calibur 2, Run Like Hell, Marvel Vs Capcom 2: New Age of Heroes, Micro Machines, Ratchet & Clank. **REVIEWS:** Shox, Kelly Slater's Pro Surfer, Crashed, TimeSplitters 2, Madden NFL 2003, NHL 2003, Riding Spirits, Hitman 2: Silent Assassin, This is Soccer 2003, Ninja Assault, Turok Evolution, Street Hoops.
EXTRAS: Colin McRae Rally 3: Behind the Scenes (multi-angle). **IMPORTS:** Virtua Cop: Rebirth, Auto Modellista, GioGio's Bizarre Adventure.

WIN!

capcom prize packs!

Capcom has long been recognised as one of the world's premier game publishers and developers. From coin-op classics such as *Ghosts 'n' Goblins*, *Strider* and the *Streetfighter* series to home console legends like *Resident Evil*, *Devil May Cry* and, well, the *Streetfighter* series, the Japanese giant has been responsible for some of videogaming's finest ever moments. That trend appears set to continue well into the future, with THQ having signed up all of Capcom's games for distribution in Australia during the months ahead. Three of the first titles to be released under this agreement include *Onimusha 2*, *Auto Modellista* and *Dino Stalker*. And whaddya know? THQ has given us copies of each, plus two Capcom t-shirts to give away to some lucky readers. To be in the running to win, just answer the following frighteningly easy question:

Q. What is the name of the hero in Onimusha 2?

Write your answer on the back of an envelope and send your entry to:
I love Capcom
PSW
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Australia



COMPETITION WINNERS

PSW#4

BLADE 2

K. Driscoll, Bundaberg QLD
Kosta Manolopoulos, St Marys NSW

THRUSTMASTER

Brett Campbell, Rutherglen VIC
Bryce Howden, St Albans VIC
Frank Vreugdenhil, Chatswood NSW
Jason Mackley, Daylesford VIC
Sharon McArthur, Launceston TAS

UFC THROWDOWN

David Milne, Diamond Creek VIC
Gary Krieger, Mt Gravatt East QLD
Gentil Daniel Fernandes, East Preston VIC
M. Smith, Hornsby NSW
Richard Farmer, Warwick Farm NSW



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+ SKULL-TO-KERB + HIT BY CAR + **DEATH**

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JAMES BOND 007: NIGHTFIRE / THE TERMINATOR / MORTAL KOMBAT / WWE SMACKDOWN! AND MORE!

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